Thursday January 16 1997

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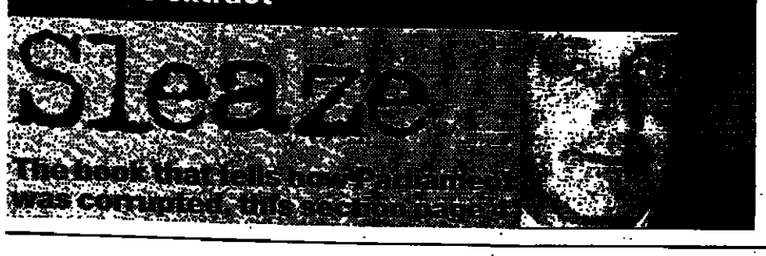
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NEWSPAPER OF THE YEAR

46,762

Exclusive extract



Sleaze

The book that fell ... was corrupted ...

Diana in Angola ...



A moral leader for our time?

... section page 3

OnLine

Improving the weather forcast

Garage 12/13

Turmoil over nuclear safety

Threat to £2bn disposal project

Paul Brown
Environment Correspondent

THE £2 billion project to dispose of Britain's mountain of lethal nuclear waste was thrown into turmoil yesterday when the chief scientist of the company in charge of the Sellafield *scheme said it might have to* be abandoned.

A leaked memo written by Dr John Holmes, director of science for Nirex, the industry's waste disposal company, said: "I have a feeling that we may struggle to make a case for the site."

The safety case had not been made out and one of three options was to abandon the project. Another was to remodel the computer calculations so it showed the project — comparable in scale to the Channel Tunnel — in a better light.

Cumbria county council,



which was sent the memo anonymously, demanded a reopening of the public inquiry into the scheme and said: "It casts severe doubt on whether the site could ever meet the current safety requirements."

John Gummer, the Environment Secretary, who was widely expected to give the go-ahead for the first phase of the scheme soon, knew nothing about the company's doubts until yesterday.

A spokesman for the department said the new evidence would be taken into consideration.

The question of what to do with the nation's radioactive waste — at 60,000 cubic metres one of the world's largest stockpiles — has haunted the Government since the early 1980s when a scheme to place waste in a disused mine under the ICI factory at Billingham was abandoned because of public pressure. Another four proposed schemes were abandoned before the 1987 election.

The latest idea has so far cost £200 million to develop. For six months until February last year there was a public inquiry into a plan to build a rock laboratory 1,000 metres under Sellafield to see whether a full-scale depository on the site would be safe.

If it went ahead, another four years of trials and a further public inquiry would be required into the full depository. The total cost of the *scheme would be £2 billion* and would not be finished until 2015, by which time the stockpile will have doubled. Meanwhile, nuclear waste continues to pile up in expensive concrete stores.

One of the most contentious issues at the 1996 inquiry was the movement of ground water through the rock under Sellafield and whether it would eventually bring the radioactivity back to the surface and threaten future generations.

Nirex, which is financed and owned by the nuclear industry, promised a report in which it would describe the safety case for putting the rock laboratory below Longlands Farm, Gosforth.

It was lack of progress in producing a satisfactory report that led Dr Holmes to write his memo to Dr Alan Hooper, his manager of science, demanding action. He said that even though £200 million had been spent, between 10 and 100 times more data was required to sort out water seepage problems. Either much more information was needed, the method of computer *modelling* needed changing to achieve better results, or the site should be abandoned.

The three political group leaders of Cumbria county council — Bill Minto, Labour, Rex Gyngell, Conservative and David Baxter, the Liberal Democrat — issued a joint statement saying: "The Secretary of State must get to the bottom of this ... we are demanding the public inquiry be re-opened."

Michael Meacher, Labour's environmental protection spokesman, said: "The memo seems to show that Nirex is trying to manipulate the scientific data to produce the result they want. Mr Gummer should confirm that any permission given for the rock laboratory will not mean automatic permission for a long-term waste depository."

Tom Curtin, head of corporate affairs for Nirex, said the memo merely showed the head of science putting pressure on staff to come up with some results.

"We have always known and often reported that if Sellafield does not prove suitable then we will abandon it and look elsewhere. The safety case has to be made out and that is our task. We intend to carry on," he said.



Walking through a minefield . . . Diana in Angola yesterday, where she saw landmines being cleared. The princess, in armoured vest and helmet, detonated one of the mines herself

Diana dons armour as Tory attacks continue

Ruaridh Nicoll in Huambo, Rebecca Smithers and Kamal Ahmed

HUAMBO is a town of pot-holes and shattered buildings. Houses are riddled with bullet-holes, and many have been destroyed.

Yesterday it was at the centre of a different sort of battle. On one side was Diana, Princess of Wales; on the other a whispering campaign against her visit, sparked by an unnamed minister and fuelled by Tory backbenchers.

The one-time agricultural town, destroyed during the bitter civil war that has wrecked Angola, was the last stopping point for Diana's four-day tour highlighting a Red Cross campaign for an immediate ban on landmines.

As she picked her way carefully through a real minefield, warned by officials not to stray from the road for fear of undetonated mines, she made it clear that she viewed the comments from Britain as a distraction.

"All I'm trying to do is help," she told reporters.

The government minister who described her trip as "ill-advised" and branded her a "loose cannon" remained unidentified yesterday.

Attention moved from Nicholas Soames, the defence minister and close friend of the Prince of Wales, and focused on Earl Howe, a junior defence minister.

The Ministry of Defence confirmed that Earl Howe had had lunch with two lobby correspondents the day before the story broke. But officials insisted he did not recognise any of the comments attributed to him.

Although Whitehall officials tried to play down the row, saying that Diana's comments were in line with government policy, the Conservatives are concerned that the princess's support for the Red Cross campaign in effect aligns her with Labour's "immediate ban" policy.

Peter Viggers, a Conservative member of the Commons defence select committee, described Diana's remarks as

Mine games



"ill-informed". He said: "This is an important, sophisticated argument. It doesn't help simply to point at the amputees and say how terrible it is.

"The parallel of nuclear weapons comes to mind. The other parallel that comes to my mind is Brigitte Bardot and cats. It doesn't actually add much to the sum of human knowledge."

David Clark, the shadow defence secretary, defended the princess. "The Tories are clearly badly out of step with people's belief that the trade in landmines must be stopped," he said.

He added that Labour "deplored this cowardly attack on Diana by an anonymous minister which seems to have hints of a personal vendetta".

Mike Whittan, head of the British Red Cross, who is travelling with Diana, described the row as "a bit of mischief".

The princess flew yesterday to Kuito, travelling through a town which at one stage during the war had the front line running down its main street.

Then it was on to Huambo where the Halo Trust, a demining organisation, provided a demonstration of its work. She watched the painstaking process of clearing the topsoil to reveal the mines that have left the country a wreck of walking wounded.

"I was 16 years old when I stood on an anti-personnel mine," said Eduardo Lucas, now aged 17. "I like the visit of Princess Diana very much. She seems nice and beautiful as well."

The princess put on an armoured vest and a helmet resembling a welding mask before being taken to see demining work, detonating one of the mines being cleared.

Today she flies to Johannesburg before returning to Britain.

Leader comment, page 8; St Diana's agenda, page 9

Korea prepares to crush strikes

Andrew Higgins in Seoul

BATTALIONS of helmeted South Korean riot police were last night poised to storm the Roman Catholic Cathedral in Seoul sheltering the wanted leaders of three weeks of industrial unrest which the government yesterday linked ominously to North Korea.

After battles that paralysed an eight-lane thoroughfare through the city centre and engulfed it in tear-gas, an assault on the strikers' tented camp at the red-brick Myongdong Cathedral seemed inevitable and imminent.

Brandishing a weapon often used in tandem with tear-gas by South Korea's military rulers in the past, the government blamed North Korea for its troubles — a menacing development in a country where all contact with Pyongyang is taboo and even a mild word of sympathy for the Stalinist north on the Internet can lead to arrest.

The development suggests a further step towards more authoritarian rule by President Kim Young-sam, a former rebel who denounced and then put on trial the generals who in 1980 cited a fictional *North Korean conspiracy as a* pretext for the slaughter of protesters in Kwangju.

"North Korea is agitating workers to topple the government," South Korea's prosecutor, Choi Byung-kook, said yesterday. "If the unrest drags on it will give North Korea an opportunity for revolutionary struggle."

In a televised address, Mr Choi warned of "firm and resolute" action if the strikes do not end immediately. Cabinet ministers also called for action, saying the unrest could undermine the economy.

The only evidence presented by the government of any North Korean involvement are reports by Pyongyang's official Korean Central News Agency. These merely report on the strikes in a characteristically truculent and overblown style.

Last night workers and students, some still bruised from

turn to page 2, column 8

G2 front

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Sketch

Fantasy policies, know wot I mean?



Simon Hoggart

ALL over the country sad men are playing Fantasy Football, buying and disposing of players with imaginary sums of money, standing in pubs making boring remarks such as: "I mean, if I was Alex Ferguson, I'd play Cantona deep, narramean?" I suppose they feel that if they say it loud enough and often enough, someone will pay attention to their ramblings.

In the Commons once a month they play Fantasy Foreign Affairs. For an hour they pretend that anyone else in the world cares what they think. Yesterday they spent ages on the Middle East, gravely celebrating the return of the peace process, solemnly demanding the right of free passage to Hebron, earnestly calling for the release of Palestinians.

In Burma, Indonesia, China and Serbia, tyrants were reproved, new initiatives demanded, democracy proselytised. Mentally, I translated these maunderings into pub talk. "If you ask me, that Milosevic should acknowledge the validity of the democratic process, am I right?" Or, "that lot in Beijing, miserable bunch of tossers, I reckon. Yeah, another Molson ice and a bag of Phileas Fogg mini-poppadums, ta."

We learned that MPs have a miraculous ability to judge the exact moral worth of all demonstrations. For example, Lady Olga Maitland demanded that the Government should do more in Serbia. There had been half a million people on the streets over the past 55 days. "Public opinion in Belgrade are [sic] under the impression that we have not been as supportive of the opposition as they have been." (No doubt they speak of little other than Malcolm Rifkind's precise attitude to the local elections.)

But demonstrations in Indonesia are very different. Mr Jeremy Hanley, a junior Foreign Office minister, was urged to ban arms sales to that country, particularly some 15 armoured cars and water cannon. Mr Hanley clearly took a dimmer view of any crowds in Jakarta. "All states have the right to self-defence," he read from his brief.

Mr Hanley said it had been made clear to the Indonesians that British crowd control equipment should not be used "indiscriminately".

Presumably, the pledge works like this: "Baker Tango to base. Hostile crowd advancing. Request permission to fire indiscriminately."

"Permission refused, Baker Tango. You are using British equipment and must in no circumstances employ it against unarmed civilians. Return to base for French cattle prods and dum-dum bullets."

Sir David Steel pondered why the Government supported Serbian demonstrators but believed that Indonesians should be hosed down with British water cannon. Mr Hanley protested stiffly that "in the face of violent rioting there is a legitimate right to protect life and property" — a line popular with repressive regimes since the days of Louis XIV.

From Fantasy Foreign Affairs to Fantasy Fabricant ("be your own Fabricant! A year's supply of wigs for the lucky winner!") I met him by chance near the Tube entrance yesterday and he greeted me by saying: "*You* are a naughty man! Fancy writing that I waved to you!" (as described in this space yesterday).

I inquired who he had been waving at. "But you were pointing at *me*!" which is true, but he definitely did wave back.

Labour claims vaunted six-year unemployment low is the result of Tory efforts to massage the count

Fall in dole queue 'fiddled'

Larry Elliott and Sarah Ryle

GOVERNMENT attempts to exploit the latest big drop in unemployment prompted a pre-election dogfight last night as Labour accused ministers of using "fiddled" figures to deliver the lowest level of joblessness in six years.

Seizing on the 45,100 reduction in the number of people out of work and claiming benefit, John Major said falling unemployment had "broadened the smile" on Britain's face.

The Prime Minister spearheaded a concerted campaign by ministers to reap a political dividend from the continued fall in unemployment, using the fall in joblessness to 1,884,700 to yoke together two of the Conservative Party's big campaign themes — the economy and Europe.

"In the last four years, Britain has created more jobs than all the other major countries of Europe put together," Mr Major said.

"The growing strength of the economy is evident at every turn. Our long-term policies are now flowing through and improving our prospects for the future. The policies that are improving growth and creating more jobs are those our opponents have attacked at every turn."

Labour insisted that measuring unemployment by the number of eligible benefit claimants was "totally meaningless" and accused the Government of "systematically lying" about the true length of the dole queues.

The Labour Party's press machine issued a list of 17 of the most significant changes to the rules for claiming benefit since 1979.

Figures from the Office for National Statistics showed that claimant-count unemployment has fallen by 350,000 in the past year, with half the fall in the latest three months. However, the sharp improvement in the final three months of 1996 coincided with the introduction of the Jobseekers Allowance (JSA), and officials believe this may have heavily distorted the true picture.

The Treasury admitted that it, too, was sceptical, saying that the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, preferred an alternative measure of unemployment — the Labour Force Survey.

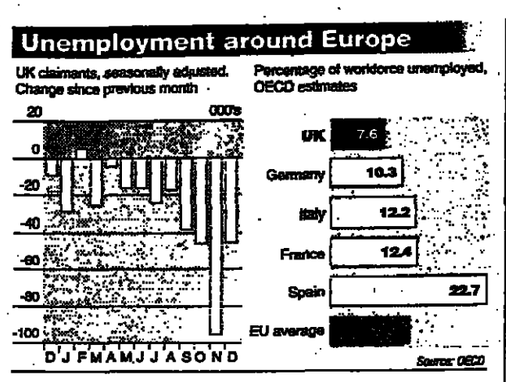
According to the LFS — an internationally-agreed yardstick which looks at availability for work rather than eligibility for benefits — unemployment is more than 300,000 higher than on the claimant-count measure, and dropping far more slowly.

In the year to last Autumn, LFS unemployment declined 166,000, while claimant count unemployment fell by 243,000. On the International Labour Organisation measure, unemployment stood at 2,230,000 against 1,928,000 people out of work and claiming benefits.

Labour's employment spokesman, Ian McCartney, said figures from the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development showed 18.9 per cent of British households had nobody working in them — the fourth highest rate in the industrialised West.

Mr McCartney claimed the LFS data showed that the falls in official unemployment were "figures of fantasy". He added: "The LFS confirms that the government has been systematically fiddling and lying about the level of unemployment in the UK.

But the Education and Employment Secretary, Gillian Shephard, said unemployment was falling in Britain while rising "inexorably" elsewhere. She said the JSA was getting people off the count who should not be there and this, coupled with strong growth in jobs and an improving labour market, had led to larger falls in unemployment.





Strikers try to kick away tear-gas cannisters during yesterday's violent clashes with police in the South Korean capital, Seoul PHOTOGRAPH: PAUL BARKER

Seoul moves towards tough clampdown on strike unrest

continued from page 1

clashes with police earlier in the day, manned a fragile perimeter of metal barriers around the cathedral.

The violence earlier in the day — in which about 15,000 protesters had hurled paving stones and charged with iron bars in an abortive attempt to penetrate police lines around the cathedral — was the most sustained in the capital since the government enacted a new labour law in a clandestine session of parliament on December 26.

In another sign of the hardening official mood, authorities yesterday told two British trade unionists and colleagues from Italy and Japan that they would be deported if they have any further contact with strike leaders holed up at Myongdong. The cathedral's grounds have become headquarters for the Korean Confederation of Trade Unions — officially illegal despite having half a million members.

Arrest warrants have been issued for the organisation's entire leadership and, yesterday, one was reported to have been seized.

A letter from the justice ministry accused the foreign labour activists of "disturbing the peace".

John Evans, head of the trade-union advisory committee to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, called on police not to attack the cathedral. "If they go in it is not going to solve anything," Mr Evans said. "There will be more strikes and Korea's name is going to look like mud abroad."

But with strike action fizzling fast, the government appears keen to crush the movement entirely. It will have been heartened by the example of Ulsan, an industrial city in the south, where workers at Hyundai, once known for their fierce militancy, smashed through picket lines to keep the country's largest dock operating. Many strike-breakers had their blue overalls splashed with yellow paint.

The four-member foreign labour mission threatened with expulsion had come to Seoul to show solidarity with South Korean strikers, and are scheduled to leave today.

"The president talks about globalisation all the time but it seems that only companies can have foreign contacts," Mr Evans said. "If ordinary people want to meet with foreigners, it becomes foreign interference."

Review

Old and new in perfect harmony

John Fordham

Gene Harris/Andy Sheppard Jazz Cafe/Ronnie Scott's

THE virtues of Old Jazz and New Jazz were represented on two London stages on the same night this week. Gene Harris, the 64-year-old pianist from Michigan, delivered a stomping virtuoso performance of mainstream swing, gospel, blues and boogie-woogie at the Jazz Cafe, to prove that even the most travel-weary of orthodox materials can be explosively rejuvenated in the right hands. Down the road in Soho, Andy Sheppard, the 39-year-old saxophonist from Warminster, brought a classy new quartet to Ronnie Scott's, demonstrating that similar virtues to Harris's — intelligent use of dynamics, building of narrative logic, teasing balances of compelling grooves against eloquent rumination — work even if the repertoires are chalk and cheese.

If you miss the kind of jazz in which the audience goads and cheers the band to still more ecstatic heights, like a congregation driving on a holy-rolling preacher, Gene Harris was the remedy.

His performance launched an unbroken flow of pieces off the back of each other without announcement, seething swing suddenly hurtling out of densely weaving unaccompanied arpeggios, dropping away into slow left-hand blues patterns hit so hard as to threaten the life of the piano frame, charging boogie-woogie turning abruptly into a caressing account of Misty. But beneath all this were less explicit but crucial qualities such as Harris's exquisite control of tone and his work's passionate inspiration in the blues. Old Jazz certainly, but the message is indestructible.

Following this hell-raising performance, Andy Sheppard's at Ronnie Scott's was bound to seem a shade retiring, but though the set did get stuck on one lengthy mid-tempo Latin shuffle in which the quiet blizzard of dozens of soprano-sax notes simply covered whatever tracks the tune was trying to follow, for the most part an excellent new group suggested that the saxophonist continues to avoid stereotyping himself.

Sheppard used the device of atonal music unceremoniously hurled into the midst of regular melody a couple of times, and the contrasts worked almost as well as Gene Harris's mischievous coupling of roaring boogie against lush balladeering.

This review appeared in some editions yesterday.

Extradition attempt fails

Irish actor sought in Germany for alleged barracks bombing freed

Vivek Chaudhary in Belfast

AN ACTOR who once played the role of a policeman in a BBC drama about the Northern Ireland troubles has been freed by the Irish government after a failed attempt to extradite him to Germany for his alleged involvement in the bombing of a British army barracks.

James Anthony Corry, aged 27, was released by Ireland's Justice Minister Nora Owen after his lawyer produced evidence of his Irish citizenship. He was due to appear at Dublin district court next week for a full extradition hearing.

Mr Corry, who was arrested in the Irish Republic last November, was wanted with four others for his alleged role in the mortar bomb attack on the barracks in Osnabruck last June.

Roisin McAliskey, daughter of former republican MP Bernadette McAliskey is being held in a London prison in connection with the attack and is also awaiting extradition to Germany. No one was hurt in the attack but several buildings were damaged.

Justice Minister Nora Owen said Mr Corry was released from the high-security Portaloise prison, 60 miles outside Dublin, on Tuesday night because German law did not permit the extradition of its own nationals to another country. Because no reciprocal arrangement is in place between the two countries, this means an Irish national cannot be extradited to Germany.

His release is sure to embarrass the Irish government and judiciary system which has been criticised in the past following a number of failed extradition attempts of suspected terrorists, especially to the United Kingdom.

Mr Corry, who was born and lived in Belfast until the time of his arrest, is believed to be staying in the north of Dublin. He faces arrest and possible extradition if he travels to Northern Ireland or elsewhere in the United Kingdom.

Married with two children, he has appeared in several films and plays including the highly acclaimed BBC2 drama Precious Blood, televised last autumn, which tells the story of a woman from Northern Ireland whose husband is killed by paramilitary gunmen at the height of the Troubles.

Mr Corry's wife Christine claims her husband was in the Republic of Ireland at the time of the mortar attack and had left their Belfast home to audition for a part in a television commercial. She also denies he was ever a member of a republican movement or has any interest in politics.

Politicans in Northern Ireland criticised the decision. Kem Maginnis, Ulster Unionist leader, said: "It is depressing to find that the Irish government continues to lack any stomach for the fight against terrorism."

Al Fayed carried thousands 'for cash-hungry ministers'

David Hencke Westminster Correspondent

MOHAMED Al Fayed, the owner of Harrods, who revealed former ministers Neil Hamilton and Tim Smith had taken cash to ask questions in the Commons, reveals on TV tonight that he regularly carries up to £10,000 in his briefcase.

In his first public interview since he revealed the scandal to the Guardian two years ago, he tells the Channel 4 programme Dispatches that he always had cash with him to pay the former ministers.

"Always ... in my briefcase I have £5,000 or £10,000. It depends where I am going. But all the time I have cash with me in my briefcase."

Mr Al Fayed tells the programme that Mr Hamilton kept asking for more, knowing that he always had at least £2,500 on him. Either he paid the money on the spot, or said it would be left with his security guards at his apartment, or asked his secretary to put the cash in an envelope for collection.

Mr Al Fayed dismisses Mr Hamilton's claims that he is a liar. "The Guardian put the story right and I don't need to say bullshit or lies. The whole documents are in court — all the evidence, all the witnesses, everything was ready and I was ready to stand there and say what I believe in.

"And it was up to the jury and the judge to decide if this guy is a bastard, liar and cheat like the Guardian said, or me."

The documentary includes a frank interview with the former health minister Edwina Currie, who was put under enormous pressure by Mr Hamilton to legalise a cancer-inducing chewing tobacco while he was being paid by the lobbyist Ian Greer to represent his client.

She says: "The fact that people were being paid to lobby was far from unusual; it was fairly common ... Some of them boasted about it ... They regarded it as a very successful bandwagon, and those who wouldn't do it were regarded as lunatic."

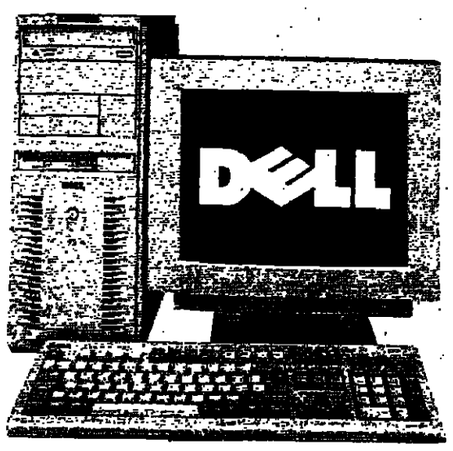
Blood money, page 4

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Docklands denounces Welsh drama



Children from Tiger Bay, the former docklands area of Cardiff, listen to gramophone records in one of a series of Bert Hardy photographs for Picture Post, published in 1950

Waterfront soap turns into real real life saga as Tiger Bay threatens to savage BBC

Andrew Culf
Media Correspondent

TIGER Bay in Cardiff, the scene of Britain's first race riots, is facing a fresh struggle — this time over its portrayal in a BBC soap opera.

Residents of the former docklands are threatening to disrupt filming of a television series because they claim the BBC has reneged on promises to involve the community.

Early in the century Tiger Bay had a reputation as Britain's most lively and dangerous waterfront, where prostitution and violence thrived. Its residents from many cultures mingled with miners out on the town's clubs for the evening. But a £2.4 billion regeneration scheme has brought yuppie-style development and the promise of prosperity to the Bute Town district of Cardiff, perhaps best known as the birthplace of the singer Shirley Bassey.

People are warning that the area's reputation could be tarnished by the eight-part BBC Wales series Tiger Bay, which is scheduled for a prime-time slot on BBC1 in the autumn. BBC Wales is hoping the £2 million-plus drama will acquire regular soap status. Richard Wayne Jenkins, a part-time local writer, who claimed the BBC had back-tracked on offers of community involvement, said: "Passions are running high. The area has a proud community history, but the first two episodes could be called racist and clichéd."

Tiger Bay has a large ethnic-minority population, but harmonious race relations. Mr Jenkins said: "Any hint of racial conflict in a big soap on network UK television is unacceptable."

The BBC rejected suggestions of racist overtones in the script and said the community had been heavily involved in the project, which is overseen by the radical Welsh film maker Karl Francis, head of drama for BBC Wales.

A spokesman for BBC Wales said: "A lot of hard work has gone into nurturing local talent." One of the writers was the local resident Leonora Brito, 10 members of the supporting cast had been drawn from the area and six ethnic-minority bursaries had been established for local people to learn technical and production skills.

But Mr Jenkins said: "We were told local people would be involved — but it became clear they were not seriously considering them for important roles. They are just going to become extra fodder."

A meeting is to be held today between local people, Mr Francis, and producer Glenda Jones, a veteran of the Welsh answer to Brookside, S4C's Pobol y Cwm.

Mr Jenkins said: "We are planning to boycott the eight-week location shoot when it begins on Monday. The tactics have yet to be decided but we could block the streets or bring out the entire population on to Bute Street."

The BBC said the series was an attempt to increase BBC Wales's contribution to network television. It has lagged behind BBC Scotland and Northern Ireland, which have delivered a string of ratings breakthroughs, including Hamish Macbeth and Ballykissangel.

The spokesman stressed the BBC's commitment to community projects in the area. When he was appointed a year ago, Mr Francis said: "My aim is to get more Welsh actors, more Welsh accents, more Welsh writers and more Welsh craft talent onto British screens."

The BBC said: "There was never a promise that locals would have prominent roles in Tiger Bay. But it was an opportunity to nurture talent in that area. There were never any guarantees."

Tiger Bay focuses on the tensions in a group of characters living in the docklands who are faced with an influx of newcomers attracted by development.

Merseyside faces big job cuts at Ford

Chris Barrie and Martyn Halsall

MERSEYSIDE is this morning braced for one of the heaviest blows to its struggling economy as Ford announces up to 1,300 job losses at its plant in Halewood.

With trade union officials and senior managers due to meet at the car factory today to discuss its future, local unionists last night forecast that big jobs cuts — up to 30 per cent of the current workforce — were on the way as the price of keeping the plant open.

Ford has sought to calm speculation that Halewood's days as a maker of mass market cars are over, but it emerged last night that the company was considering switching production of the Transit van from the Continent to the plant to replace the Escort car, which goes out of production in 18 months' time.

The new version of the Escort is to be made in Germany and Spain. No commitment has been given to Halewood's 4,500 workers in the car manufacturing plant.

With a by-election pending across the Mersey in Wirral South, Labour condemned the imminent job cuts as a devastating blow to a region already suffering high unemployment.

Ian McCartney, employment spokesman, said: "We have already lost 180,000 manufacturing jobs over the past few years in the North-west and this announcement would give the lie to government claims that they have created the investment centre of Europe."

The devastation was underlined by Father Richard Colbert, parish priest of St Mark's in Halewood.

Father Colbert, in the parish for more than 20 years, recalled that the Halewood plant once employed 14,000 people. He said of the workforce: "They are very good people there and they don't want to create any problems. If there has to be a reduction [in jobs] they will understand if it is explained to them."

But Tony Woodley, the Transport and General Workers' Union's chief negotiator for the motor industry, warned that the trade unions would co-ordinate action to prevent closure. He said it made "no economic or political sense" to close Halewood, but the plant needed adequate investment to ensure its future.

Notebook, page 11

Country life goes back to nature with nude model sporting pearls

Lawrence Donegan

COUNTRY Life magazine, required reading for genteel town ladies and green-wellied dukes since 1897, celebrates it centenary today by publishing photographs of a nude model.

The side view of a naked woman wearing only a pearl necklace draped around her waist appears in a fashion feature called "Girls in Pearls" and leaves nothing to the imagination.

Historians may recall that the magazine's first "girls in pearls" model was Queen Victoria, who posed in a regal gown with a string of pearls and a pair of pearl drop earrings.

Clive Aslet, editor of Country Life for four years, said last night that the five-page spread in the latest edition was designed to be a play on that original idea.

Mr Aslet said the pictures were artistic and in the spirit of the magazine — "the pursuit of quality in all the different aspects of life".

Mr Aslet's explanation was not enough to satisfy Dame Barbara Cartland, a Country Life subscriber for 80 years. "It is so very, very sad how everything has become sordid these days. All this business of sex, why can't people just leave it alone and behave like ladies and gentlemen?"

But John Mortimer, novelist and occasional Country Life browser, said he could see no objection to the pictures. "In fact, I would say it is very exciting. I don't know if this will come as a surprise to readers of Country Life but there are naked ladies in the country, as well as in the town."



Roger Walker as Bunny and Kathy Pitkin as Fizz in the first episode of Eldorado, which was axed after 12 months

Soaps that slipped out of sight

□ **ELDORADO:** £10 million sun, sex, and sangria soap was hailed as the show that would rescue BBC1 from the ratings doldrums. But life with the ex-pats on the Costa del Sol proved such a turn off it was axed in 1993 after just 12 months.

□ **ALBION MARKET:** Ill-fated 1985 attempt by Granada to provide a soap companion for Coronation Street. Set in a covered Manchester market (which was actually a warehouse in Salford) it stumbled through just 100 episodes before the plug was pulled. Now showing on the Granada Plus satellite channel.

□ **TRIANGLE:** BBC1 thrice-weekly series which achieved cult status during its two-year existence because it was so bad. Set on a North Sea ferry sailing between Felixstowe, Gothenburg and Amsterdam, it starred Kate O'Mara. It was destined to rapidly sink without trace in 1983.

CASTLES: Granada made this BBC1 flop, which ran for just 24 episodes in the summer of 1995. Audiences for leaden tale of three generations of a London family fell to just 3 million before the axe was wielded.

TRAINER: Horse saga, filmed on the Berkshire Downs, ran for two series before galloping into the dusty vaults of BBC Television Centre in 1992.

Victims of ancient family planning unearthed in mass babies' grave

Tim Radford
Science Editor

SCIENTISTS have found a mass grave of more than 100 babies — all only one or two days old — in a Roman settlement in fourth century Israel. Geneticists who recovered DNA from 19 skeletons confirm today that 14 of the babies were boys and five girls.

The discovery — in the remains of a sewer underneath what was once a bath house in Roman Ashkelon — is reported in Nature. It is a reminder that in the Roman world family planning usually began after birth rather than before conception.

The infanticide of unwanted females in the ancient world is well known. A letter from 1BC, written by a certain Hilarion to his wife Alis, says "... If it is a boy, keep it, if a girl discard it".

But Ariella Oppenheim, of the Hadassah medical school in Jerusalem, and colleagues believe that the find at Ashkelon was made under a brothel. Lamps previously found in the bath house were decorated with erotic images. A Greek inscription read: "Enter, enjoy and..."

The babies' bones were found in a gutter, mixed up with animals' bones, broken pottery and coins. The scientists recovered 43 left femurs, and produced useful DNA from almost half of them.

"The significant number of male victims was unexpected and raised the intriguing possibility that these infants may have been the unwanted offspring of courtesans working in the bath house," they say.

Theya Molleson, of the Natural History Museum in London, was not surprised by the find. Infanticide, sometimes by abandonment, was common in Britain, Gaul and other corners of the Roman empire. "A baby was kept alive if the father made the decision for it to be reared. It was very much an active decision such as we might take in deciding to start a family. They didn't have the ready access to contraception that we have, so the decision was made later, once the baby was born," she said.

"That is totally normal procedure throughout the Roman world. It was straightforward population control. We had always assumed that most of them had been girls," she said. "I don't think there was anything callous about it. I don't think people liked doing it, and once or twice you do read of the heartache involved."

In the Roman world, the baby was normally inspected by the midwife: if the infant was healthy and unblemished, she would cut the cord and offer it to the father. If the father accepted it, the child had a future. If not, it was killed or abandoned on a hillside.

The practice extended beyond the Roman world. "It went on right to the 19th century and still goes on in many countries," she said.



What can erase the final humiliation of Fergie, locked out of her own house and peering through the window, or the revelation that she has colour-coded drawers to help her locate her knickers?
Maggie Brown on Ruby Wax

Women G2 page 4

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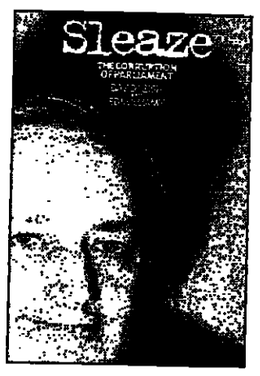
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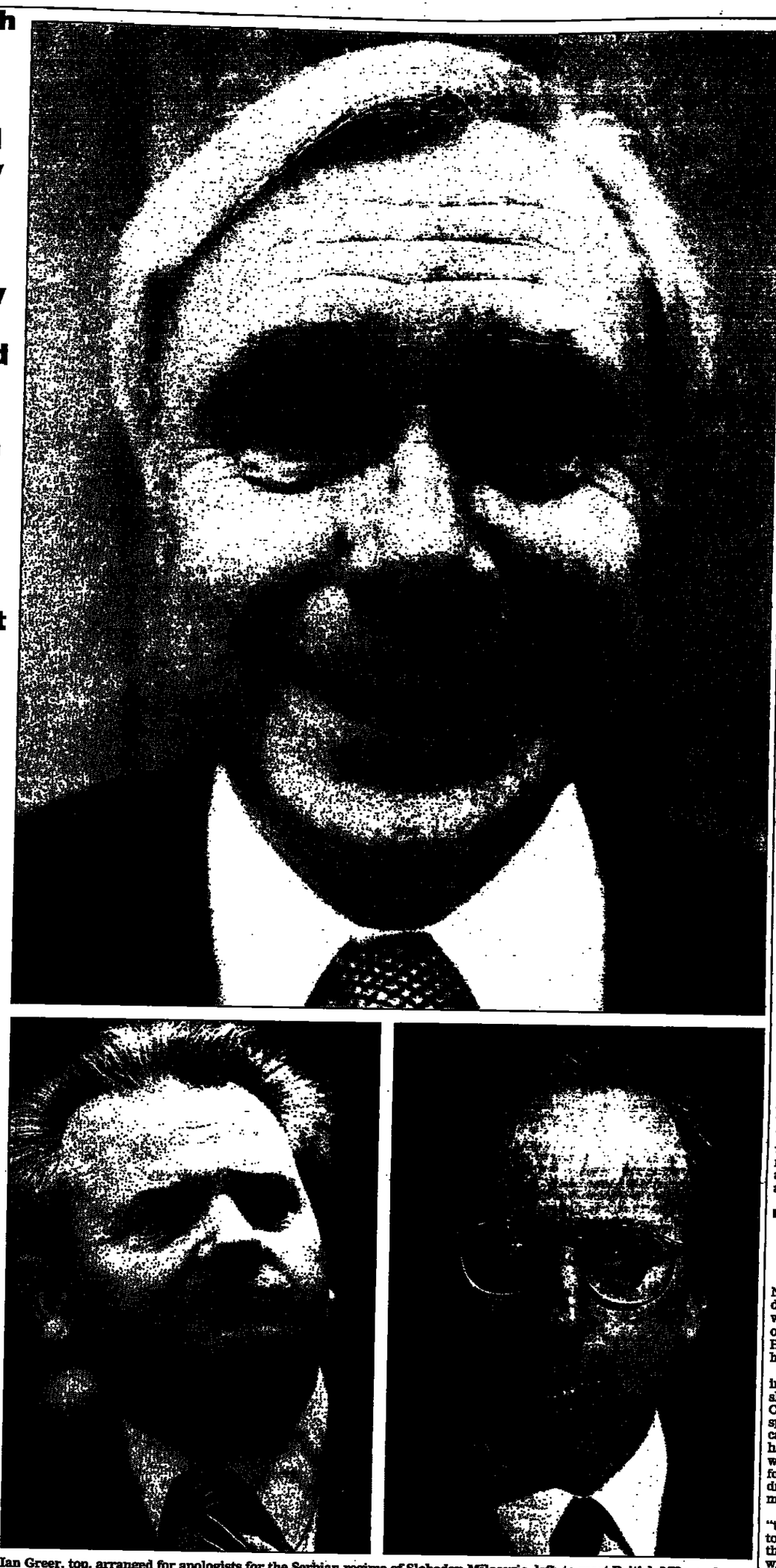
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The Guardian book which charts the rise, exposure and final collapse of Ian Greer, the political lobbyist and his web of parliamentary lackeys — among them Neil Hamilton, the disgraced former Tory minister — is published today. In this extract David Leigh and Ed Vulliamy chart the course of two secretive lobbying operations which were — in different ways — both disgusting and deadly.



Blood money: how Serbia bought British favours



Ian Greer, top, arranged for apologists for the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic, left, to meet British MPs, and even have the ear of the then defence secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, right, whose 'spinelessness towards Serbia was remarkable'

ENSCONCED in his Catherine Place office — with its Asprey silverware, the team of personable young men, and the poodles on the sofa — the lobbyist Ian Greer had become an emblem of British political life in the 1980s.

If you wanted wires pulled, Greer was the new way to do it. He always tried to give the impression that what he did was a public service; he liked to talk about "the right to be heard". He compared himself to a barrister, taking on all kinds of clients and pleading their cause.

But unlike the work of a barrister, what Greer did with his tame MPs was secret, and unregulated by any code of professional discipline. In fact, what Greer was doing at the end of the 1980s was gravely corrupting the democratic process for money.

Evidence has now surfaced of the way Greer paid politicians to advance a client's cause. One of those clients was a foreign regime, and one was a foreign corporation. Both accounts, had they not been hidden from view, would have been regarded by most people as disgusting.

The contracts were for the government of Serbia, during the bloody break-up of Yugoslavia; and for US Tobacco Inc, makers of the carcinogenic chewing tobacco, Skoal Bandits.

In 1992, the Serbian regime of Slobodan Milosevic unleashed a hurricane of violence across the still-born Balkan republic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, the most ferocious carnage to blight Europe since the Third Reich. Behind the scenes, the Serbs had also been busy within British politics, and it was Ian Greer Associates (IGA) who acted as promoters of their interests. President Milosevic paid Greer almost £100,000 for his help.

For half a decade, Milosevic had been preparing for war in pursuit of a "Greater Serbia" in which other ethnic groups and any trace of their history would be obliterated. Milosevic and his Bosnian Serb acolytes — Radovan Karadzic and General Ratko Mladic — unleashed a terrifying ragbag of death squads, freebooting paramilitary units, artillery batteries and regular troops against the astonished Bosnian Muslim citizenry.

What Greer did with his tame MPs was secret and corrupt



Serbian units moved across the Drina river, the border between Serbia and Bosnia, to begin a pogrom that became known as "ethnic cleansing", rounding up Muslims and killing them, deporting them or incarcerating them in concentration camps.

The justification of such a programme in the corridors of western power had to be carefully managed by the Serbs. Central to the project in Bosnia was the need to obfuscate what the Hague War Crimes Tribunal labels "genocide" with talk, rather, of "inevitable civil war" — to create some impression of comparable rival claims, an equation between perpetrator and victim, and thereby stall robust international action.

To exert this kind of influence, the Serbs needed to locate the fulcrum of the international stage, and to lobby there. And one of the main focal points was Britain.

One senior American diplomat at the United Nations described Britain as having forged "the lowest common denominator" in taking and selling the line of least resistance to the Serbs. Thus, for three bloody years, the British stifled, filibustered and sabotaged initiatives by elements in the US administration and elsewhere for tough action.

One senior official in the State Department who had tried to get his government to intervene more robustly said: "I learned to treat Britain as a hostile power, out to block anything, everything ... I came to think of the British as like having the Russians around the State Department."

The Serbs were paying lobbyists to reinforce this latent sympathy through personal contacts at the highest levels in Westminster. And one of the central figures working to establish those contacts was Ian Greer.

Greer did his job the way he knows best: he hosted receptions in the Palace of Westminster at which leading Serbian apologists and supporters could rub shoulders with MPs and foreign policy committee members.

He worked though backbench committees, like the all-party Yugoslav Affairs Committee, seeking to set in motion the ousting of anti-Milosevic politicians, and replacing them with witting or unwitting stooges for the Belgrade regime.

With a politician of Yugoslav origins, John Kennedy, sitting on a Conservative policy group, Greer secured a direct route to the ear of then then defence secretary, Malcolm Rifkind. This was one of Greer's more subtly-waged campaigns, in which the weapons were not so much the brazen bung, but more the whisper in the ear.

With Croatia in ruins, and as ethnic cleansing reached its bloody climax in Bosnia in the spring of 1992, the flow of Serbian government money to IGA was well under way. Greer denied to his staff that the money was coming from the government of Serbia, rather than from some Balkan "businessmen", and has denied it publicly since. In the Sunday Times in 1995, he said he had been "approached ... to promote the cause of Yugoslav industrialists in Britain".

He was lying. The Serbian regime paid Greer £55,000 between December 5, 1991 and March 31, 1992, while Milosevic was taking the surrender of Vukovar and arming his people for the onslaught in Bosnia.

Then, in April 1992, as the death squads cut a swath along the Drina valley, Ian Greer swallowed another flow of cash from Belgrade — £41,250 to secure his services until 30 June. The total was £96,250 in what was — if the term has any meaning at all — blood money.

Before banking Milosevic's thousands, Greer had to make some necessary payments to a third party: a British Conservative candidate with a bizarrely colourful background who was operating energetically on the Serbs' behalf. He went by the name of John Kennedy, but called himself a Yugoslav, from Montenegro, the statelet that had placed itself at the service of Serbia,

The Serbs needed to justify their killings to the West



and whose rocky soil had also spawned Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb "president" now wanted for genocide.

Kennedy was born John Gvozdenovic in Belgrade, to an English academic mother and a father from a minor Montenegrin aristocratic family. He deployed this aristocratic descent to find a niche as private secretary to Prince Michael of Kent, cousin to the Queen. In summer 1991, the 29-year-old "aristocrat" started to visit the militaristic Serbian regime, and set up British connections for them. He became secretary of a Tory group, the Conservative Council for Eastern Europe.

Kennedy's political associate, John Moore, introduced him to Greer, and the government of Serbia signed a contract with the lobbyist to promote their cause in Britain. The kick-back from Greer to Kennedy for the Serb lobbying contract was 50 per cent of the Serbian cash.

Greer and Kennedy threw at least four receptions for MPs with the Serbian cause in mind, during the second half of 1991 and early 1992 — for the Yugoslav affairs all-party committee or the Conservative Council for Eastern Europe. They would invite people who showed an interest, including the Conservative David Faber and Labour's Bob Wareing.

The Council for Eastern Europe was under the sway of Henry Bellingham MP, who happened to be parliamentary private secretary to the then defence secretary, Malcolm Rifkind. Rifkind's own spineless performance on Bosnia was one of the dominant themes in Britain's non-handling of the war.

The champagne — £3,600 worth — flowed lavishly at the National Portrait Gallery in Trafalgar Square that February, amid the hubbub of 600 smart guests, mostly politicians and industrialists. Greer had hired the art gallery for the biggest bash of his career: the firm's 10th anniversary.

The guest of honour was the new Prime Minister himself, Greer's acquaintance for a quarter of a century. The lobbyist would not have been sorry when the newspapers got hold of a charming anecdote to point up the fact that John Major came to his parties: it seemed that, suddenly remembering the point, Greer sent to The Chandos, the pub nearby, and presented to the PM on a silver salver the drink his intimates knew he really liked — not bubbly, but a weak gin and tonic. What the diary columns did not go on to say was that Mr Major's gin and tonic, the 300 bottles of bubbly, and many others, came from a secret river of cash being provided by the butcher of the Balkans, Slobodan Milosevic.

May 1992 was an especially bloody month in Bosnia: people queuing for scarce supplies of bread in a narrow Sarajevo street were blown to pieces by a carefully aimed Serbian mortar, for the world's television cameras to behold. During the last week of the month, an orgy of killing began inside the camps. The first reports were leaking out of a mass grave at Brcko, and Muslims thrown into an abattoir furnace.

Greer was targeting as many MP contacts as he could, writing to them and putting forward the Serbs' position. The debate on the arms embargo and sanctions against Serbia began at the United Nations in September 1991, and had been in the public domain for several months beforehand as the war in Croatia proceeded. But the final imposition of mandatory sanctions on Yugoslavia came on 30 May 1992. Greer's contract finished at the end of June. Greer said subsequently that "when the UN imposed sanctions [on Yugoslavia], we thought it would be inappropriate to continue our association with Mr Kennedy".

After that John Kennedy continued to go it alone, so the fruits of the work with MPs outlived Greer's contract with Belgrade. Kennedy arranged more trips for MPs, he escorted Radovan Karadzic, the Bosnian Serb leader currently charged with war crimes, round London; and he sought to organise extensive Serb donations to the Conservative Party.

At its most creative, Kennedy's and Greer's work involved injecting the language of obfuscation into the British debate. The lobbyists perpetrated the old trick of urging neutrality between bully and victim; it had worked well in the 1930s with Hitler, and it was working well in the bridge that was built between Whitehall and the butchers of the Balkans. Greer took money from murderers — and his conscience never apparently tormented him.

THE FICTIONAL spirit of Alan B'stard MP, Rick Mayall's comic TV villain, was uncannily imitated by Neil Hamilton MP one fine day in New York, in 1988, when he strode into the lobby of the top-of-the-range Essex House Hotel, accompanied by his wife Christine.

The Tory MP was luxuriating in a piece of behaviour so shameless that even his own Conservative colleagues spluttered in disgust when it came out. He was taking a handsome amount of cash, with a few perks thrown in, for promoting an addictive drug that the British government was trying to ban.

The story of Skoal Bandits, "teabags" made of chewing tobacco, was so outrageous that Alan B'stard's own script writers might have hesitated before penning it.

"It was monstrous that US Tobacco were free to peddle a noxious substance like this", says the Conservative health minister at the time, David Mellor. But thanks to the endeavours of Neil Hamilton, orchestrated as usual by Ian Greer, the firm's operations were not closed down for five years.

The Essex House in New York, into which Hamilton marched in 1988, is one of the city's finest hotels, on the south side of Central Park. Flanking it is Fifth Avenue to the east, the finest shopping street in the world, and to the west, the mighty Avenue of the Americas, with its great towers of glass and steel. Neil and Christine in the Big Apple: how much better could life get? They had visited the Paris Ritz, courtesy of Mohamed Al Fayed, the previous year. This time US Tobacco, the manufacturers of Skoal Bandits, were delighted to pick up the tab.

He and Christine had visited the firm's Connecticut headquarters and were now staying in a $500-a-night suite at the Essex House. The couple had barely spent a dime during the whole trip.

The Hamiltons were there because US Tobacco had a problem in Britain and wanted results from this British politician.

Despite — or perhaps because of — pressure from health groups in the United States, US Tobacco decided to market Skoal Bandits overseas. In 1985 they set up their European base in the UK with a £193,000 government grant to build a distribution centre at East Kilbride in Scotland.

US Tobacco aggressively marketed their new "smokeless" product. Students were paid £30 a month to push the tobacco teabags on campus. But in the early 1980s public health authorities worldwide found that the use of smokeless tobacco increased the risk of oral disease, including cancer. They also found that the products were highly addictive.

Anti-tobacco groups, described by Hamilton as "health fascists", began a campaign to get the product banned. A small chorus of MPs asked questions in the House about Skoal Bandits and its possible dangers to children.

UST fought back. In December 1985 Tory MP Michael Brown asked his first supportive parliamentary questions about Skoal Bandits. For a man who claimed "I can honestly say that I never had one puff of a cigarette", he put up a good defence for the tobacco trade, but that was not the only mystery about Michael Brown's intervention. The MP for Brigg and Cleethorpes had no apparent constituency interest, and no connections with Scotland, where UST was based. But Brown did have an interest in the lobbying game.

In January 1986, John Home Robertson, the Scottish Labour MP, began to pilot a private member's bill through parliament, aimed at making the sale of Skoal Bandits to minors illegal. This is where Neil Hamilton, Michael Brown's associate, joined the parliamentary fray.

By the end of 1986, Home Robertson's bill had become law, and the government's medical advisory group on cancer privately recommended banning Skoal Bandits. A year later, in February 1988, Edwina Currie, junior health minister, announced flatly that she planned to ban the product.

The stage was set for a classic Greer/Hamilton campaign. If Hamilton's interest in the company's fortunes had previously been ideological, as he would claim, it indisputably now became a means to a few quick dollars. Brown and Hamilton arranged for Greer to meet Ted Kravotil, senior vice-president of UST, who hired Greer's lobbying company for a year at £120,000. Some of the money found its way back, in the usual fashion, to Hamilton and Brown. But there was a problem. According to Greer staff, Hamilton and Brown were both demanding their cut.

Hamilton took cash and perks for pushing an addictive drug



This usually meant paying an MP 10 per cent of the first year's fee, in this case £12,000. But Greer was not going to give them £12,000 each. "They're not getting 20 per cent", he was heard to exclaim, "they'll have to split the commission between them and take 5 per cent each." Neither Hamilton nor Brown declared the tobacco money in the MPs' register.

Hamilton and Brown claim that the commission payments placed them under no obligation to Greer or US Tobacco, and that the payments were unconnected to their position as MPs. But both immediately became the prime movers on the US Tobacco account for Greer.

The pair embarked on a series of meetings with ministers, MPs and civil servants to try to prevent the ban on Skoal Bandits. Edwina Currie refused point blank to have anything to do with them, so instead they had approached her boss Kenneth Clarke, then Health Secretary, who saw them politely but without much enthusiasm. David Mellor, who succeeded Currie as Health Minister in December 1988, was an obvious target. When Hamilton and Brown approached him on May 9, 1989, they claimed to be supporting Skoal Bandits purely on libertarian grounds.

They omitted to mention they were each earning £6,000 from Ian Greer and (in Hamilton's case) had taken an undeclared trip to the US. Mellor was surprised and repelled: "I was astonished when I received representations from certain members appealing on civil liberties grounds for the right of people to damage themselves consuming this appalling substance".

For three bloody years the British stifled US calls for tough action



Despite the brush-off from Mellor, Hamilton continued to ply his US Tobacco trade in the Commons, even going so far as to propose an amendment to the Finance Bill of 1989 which would have benefited oral tobacco. It was to no avail. Five years after being given a government grant to set up their noxious trade, the manufacturers of Skoal Bandits were finally sent packing. But at every stage of the game, Ian Greer or some of his circle of Westminster politicians had been there to hinder those who cared for the state of the nation's health.

The Corruption of Parliament, written by David Leigh and Ed Vulliamy, is published by Fourth Estate and priced at £9.99. It is now available in all good bookshops.

صكنا من الاصل

Exhibits fail to captivate ex-inspector of prisons

Judge casts eye over dead end art



Shaping up . . . Anthony-Noel Kelly with one of his exhibits yesterday

Kamal Ahmed visits a controversial show of mortality

THERE was a flurry of excitement when Judge Stephen Tumim arrived at the most controversial stand at the London Contemporary Art Fair yesterday.

He peered at the installation by Anthony-Noel Kelly — two casts of a dissected human body, one from the front, one from the back with a significant chunk missing from the skull. "I'm not really here to buy," said the former chief inspector of prisons. "I already have lots and lots of paintings."

He wandered downstairs, where his daughter Mathilda was exhibiting.

At the Jibby Beane stand, where Kelly was exhibiting, a stream of interested passersby kept curators Jonathan Goslan and Stuart Shave busy. They had read about Kelly's "controversial exhibits" in the newspapers.

On Monday, exhibition organisers threatened to take Kelly's sculptures down. Lucy Sicks, in charge of the fair in Islington, London, said that the pieces could be seen as "overtly insensitive."

Kelly, a tutor at the Prince of Wales Institute of Sculpture, uses body parts from medical schools. Questions have been raised about how he gained access to the parts and how he disposes of them.

"God, are we allowed to touch them?" said one visitor.

"Are these the ones we saw on the news?" asked another. To each Goslan replied patiently that, yes, they were the sculptures creating all the controversy.

But despite his and Shave's best efforts to explain Kelly's attempt to reveal the beauty of death the untitled work, priced at £4,500, remained unsold by the end of the day.

It was not a big buying day. The stand is costing them £3,000 for the fair, which lasts until Sunday. They are hoping for a busier weekend.

Gosland and Shave sat around smoking and drinking tea, discussing the relative merits of the new contemporary British art movement.

"A lot of it lacks any weight or technical skill," said Goslan, whose sculptures have been bought by Charles Saatchi.

"Those Damien Hirst spin paintings? Utterly the worst paintings I have ever seen in my life." One sold in the downstairs Cube Gallery for £17,500.

The media arrived at 1pm to meet Kelly, who turned up to try to explain what he was trying to do. But he would not answer any questions on where the bodies came from.

"I'm afraid I've been advised by my solicitor," he said, before pleading that he was not being deliberately provocative.

His next project is 160 pictures of naked men, women and children with the title Birthday. He admitted he was having difficulty getting children between the ages of five and 15 to pose.

Soviet realism or telling it like it was? Poll tax riot picture is defended



John Bartlett and his 'historical interpretation' of the poll tax riot PHOTOGRAPHS: GRAHAM TURNER

TRITE Soviet realism or the work of a modern-day Uccello? A representation of the poll tax riots of 1990 is set to be unveiled at the Musuem of London's new London Now gallery on Tuesday, *writes Luke Harding.*

Painted in a realistic style, the 12ft by 9ft canvas shows stick-wielding protesters fighting with police in riot gear in Trafalgar Square.

Yesterday the musuem's curator of paintings and pictures, Mireille Galinou, defended the work by John Bartlett, entitled History Painting. "It is an extremely interesting and important subject. People who say it is Soviet realism could make the same criticism about any figurative painting. It is an historical interpretation. I like it."

The exhibition aims to bring the museum up to date — its current exhibits peter out after the blitz — and show how much the capital has changed.

All-party call to try Saddam

David Hencke
Westminster Correspondent

LADY THATCHER, John Major and Tony Blair united in rare agreement yesterday to call for Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders to be tried before a war crimes tribunal if the regime in Baghdad could be toppled by an internal uprising.

Both the former prime minister, her successor and the Labour and Liberal Democrat leaders released letters of support for the international Campaign to Indict Iraqi War Criminals launched by Labour's former overseas aid spokeswoman, Ann Clwyd, yesterday.

Special branch detectives were brought into the Commons to protect Kuwaiti and Iraqi opposition speakers after the Iraqi leader had made it known in the Middle East that he was prepared to assassinate opponents of his regime in foreign countries.

The campaign, also being launched in Washington, Brussels, Jordan and Kuwait, calls for the establishment by the United Nations Security Council of a Commission for the Investigation of War Crimes.

Both Lady Thatcher and John Major, while backing the initiative, have proposed different war tribunals to try the Iraqi leaders. Lady Thatcher would like President Saddam to be tried like the first Serbian war criminals at the Hague.

In her letter she adds: "Having said that, I wish you well in your campaign and I feel that anything which draws attention to the horrors perpetuated by Saddam Hussein and his evil regime, can only be for the good."

John Major wants a genocide commission inside Iraq to try the leaders, but says he fully shares "your political objective of bringing those responsible, particularly Saddam Hussein, to justice for the atrocities committed by the Baghdad regime".

Tony Blair calls for a permanent international criminal court.

Other support has come from Lord Archer, Madame Danielle Mitterrand, widow of the former French president, Emma Bonino, the European commissioner, and Al Gore, the US vice-president.

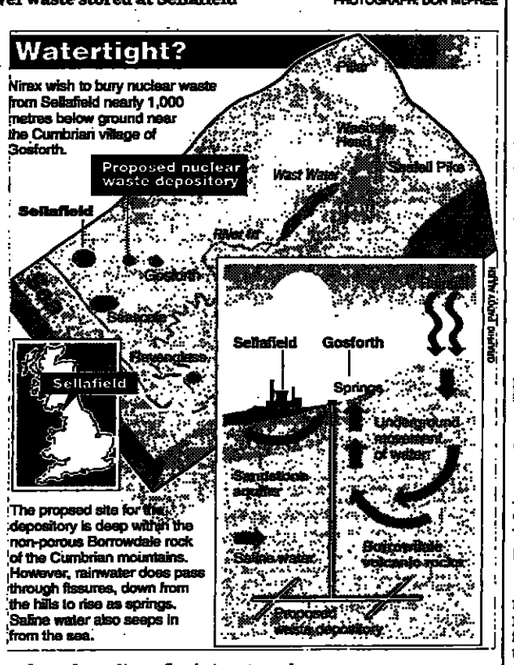
● A parliamentary bill was introduced yesterday under the Commons 10-minute rule by the Labour MP for York, Hugh Bayley, to prohibit the use of Britain's £2 billion foreign aid budget to promote arms sales, writes David Fairhall.



Nuclear stockpile . . . Low-level waste stored at Sellafield PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Seeking burial site for UK's least wanted waste

A nuclear saga by Paul Brown



RADIOACTIVE waste and the failure to find a safe way of disposing of it have caused a series of crises and delays for the nuclear industry, each one more expensive than the last.

Yesterday's leaked memo raising scientific doubts about the safety of a proposed depository beneath the Sellafield complex in Cumbria means at least another serious delay in finding a home for the UK's nuclear waste.

Preliminary investigation of the site has already cost £200 million, and much more taxpayers' money had been spent before that. One problem for the industry and the Government is that the search for a site for any nuclear installation raises more public opposition than any other issue, and finding a home for the waste is the biggest headache of all.

In the early 1980s the battleground was a disused anhydride mine beneath the ICI works at Billingham, Cleveland. It was to be a depository for intermediate-level nuclear waste, the sort too dangerous to be dumped in the sea.

Public opposition was ferocious, and the turning point came when ICI, at first willing to sell the mine to the Government, changed its mind: staff opposition to the plan was just too great.

The Government instructed the nuclear industry to look again. International opposition to the UK practice of dumping low-level waste at sea was becoming intense and in 1983 was suspended, making the problem of the mounting piles potentially serious.

The industry formed NIREX, a company to look for sites and sell the idea of a depository to the public. By 1987 it had found four potential sites in areas of heavy clay and intended to bury the waste in deep trenches. A huge public relations exercise failed to prevent powerful opposition, and just before the general election the Government told Nirex to think again.

The result is the plan to put all low and intermediate-level waste under Sellafield. (The search for a site for high-level waste has not even begun.) Researchers could find only two places — Sellafield and Dounreay in Scotland, where spent nuclear fuel is reprocessed — that showed any measure of public support for a depository.

Since most of the waste arises from reprocessing at Sellafield, transporting it to Scotland would raise too much opposition from towns on the route.

There is still a lot of opposition to the depository in Cumbria, not least from the county council. The scientific doubts can only harden that opposition.

Even if all goes well for NIREX it will 15 years before the depository can be built. If the Sellafield idea has to be abandoned the millions of pounds already spent will be wasted and the industry's public relations nightmare will begin again.

Two 'saves' cost goalie £125,000

Nick Varley

BRUCE Grobbelaar missed a £125,000 bribe from a betting syndicate after he accidentally saved two shots in one of the most exciting matches the Premiership has seen, a jury heard yesterday.

The Liverpool goalkeeper stopped two goalbound attempts late in the match with Manchester United at Anfield in January 1994 that ended in a 3-3 draw.

Later it is alleged he told a friend: "Do you know in that Manchester United game how much money I lost? 125,000 fucking pounds in cash."

The match was the first of four Grobbelaar was said to have tried to throw for the Far Eastern syndicate that had allegedly paid him £40,000 for fixing the result of a Newcastle-Liverpool match two months earlier, Winchester crown court heard.

All of his attempts failed, leaving his syndicate contact "mad as a snake", David Calvert Smith, prosecuting, said.

Grobbelaar was not the only footballer said to be in the pay of the gamblers. John Fashanu of Wimbledon was said to have received more than £70,000 from accounts controlled in the Far East.

Both Grobbelaar, aged 39, of Bramley, Surrey, and Fashanu, aged 34, of St John's Wood, London, deny two charges of corruptly giving or accepting money to influence the outcome of matches. Heng Suan Lim, aged 31, of Cricklewood, north London, who was allegedly the "short man", the syndicate's British representative, also denies two similar charges. Hans Segers, aged 35, of Fleet, Hampshire, Wimbledon's former goalkeeper, denies one charge.

Mr Calvert Smith said Grobbelaar told his former business partner, Chris Vincent, about details of the match rigging.

Asked why he had chosen the Newcastle match in November 1993, which Liverpool lost 3-0, as the first in which he took money from the syndicate for throwing a match rather than just predicting results, Grobbelaar was said to have answered: "Because I knew there's fuck all chance of winning at Newcastle. I chose Newcastle because I knew I could do business."

Weeks later, as Vincent prepared for a business visit to Zimbabwe paid for by £4,000 of the money from the Newcastle bung, Grobbelaar said he was to earn more money. "Mr Grobbelaar said he expected to do business again with the short man for £100,000 or so. While he was away Mr Grobbelaar told him to look out for the Manchester United game," Mr Calvert Smith said.

Video footage of the match shown to the jury highlighted Grobbelaar saving shots from Ryan Giggs and Roy Keane.

The court heard Grobbelaar later told Vincent "I made two blinding saves. I dived the wrong way and it hit my fucking hand."

Mr Calvert Smith said: "A minute after the final whistle Mr Lim is on the phone to Indonesia. Is that a coincidence or is it because this match ... had not been a success."

The failure led to fewer calls between Grobbelaar and Lim, which allegedly had been as many as four a day in the prelude to the Manchester United match. There were none recorded for three weeks. They resumed as Liverpool prepared to play Norwich City in February 1994.

Mr Calvert Smith said after the match, telephone contact between Grobbelaar and Lim dropped to six calls during February and March and stopped for five months, partly because Grobbelaar was dropped.

In August, Grobbelaar joined Southampton and he tried to fix two matches early in the 1994/95 season. But Southampton won 3-1 at Coventry in a match Grobbelaar warned Lim not to bet on, according to a video of conversations between Grobbelaar and Vincent made by the Sun newspaper, and drew at Manchester City in a match that would have earned the goalkeeper £50,000 to £80,000.

The case continues.

Prison ship will give more cells

Alan Travis
Home Affairs Editor

A PRISON ship is to moored off Dorset for at least three years to cope with the rapidly rising jail population, the director general of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, said yesterday.

The long term plans to use this "floating maritime facility", expected to take the first of its 400 inmates in March, indicate that the service will have to use "every available bit of accommodation" to cope with the current near-60,000 jail population plus the impact of Michael Howard's Crime (Sentences) Bill.

The ship, the Resolution, now moored in New York, is to be brought across the Atlantic and anchored near Portland in Dorset.

Ministers are considering holding immigration detainees on board.

Mr Tilt's disclosure came as he announced that eight more prisons will no longer hold category A prisoners — the most dangerous — as a result of a review of the maximum security estate held in the wake of the Whitemoor and Parkhurst escapes.

The 900 top security prisoners will in future be held in 13 prisons in England and Wales.

Security improvements are being made at these prisons, including installing X-ray and closed circuit television. Electronic "geophone" listening devices will also be installed on perimeter fences. At the time of the 1994 escape from Whitemoor prison, Cambridgeshire, category A inmates were spread among 32 prisons across the country.

The eight to lose their category A status are: Birmingham, Bullingdon in Oxfordshire, Elmley in Kent, Leeds, Liverpool, Swaleside in Kent, Winchester, and Wormwood Scrubs. Hull will continue to take Category A prisoners but only in a small secure unit.

However, ministers have yet to decide whether to act on one of the main recommendations of the official inquiry into the Parkhurst break-out two years ago. General Sir John Learmont recommended the establishment of a US-style "supermax" prison to hold the most dangerous inmates.

Mr Tilt said yesterday that the question of a "supermax" prison had not yet been settled. He said the decision to remove eight prisons from the "category A" estate meant "that the most dangerous prisoners are concentrated in a smaller group of very secure prisons".

One effect of the security review will be the establishment by the autumn of a new unit at Woodhill prison in Buckinghamshire for high-risk women. At present there are only five women inmates in this category, including Myra Hindley and Rosemary West.

The women's high security wing at Durham prison will remain in use.

Santer seeks food rules

John Palmer in Strasbourg

THE president of the European Commission, Jacques Santer, last night backed the establishment by the EU of a US-style food and drugs administration to help avert future food crises such as mad cow disease.

He denied at a special European Parliament committee of inquiry into the BSE affair that the commission had "covered up" the extent of the crisis in Britain, and revealed the scale of the bitter conflict with London over its handling of the outbreak.

He charged the British government with mishandling the crisis and said that it had been motivated primarily by "political concerns". No start would be made to easing the beef ban without a further cattle cull in Britain.

"I deny very firmly the idea that [the commission] would pay more attention to the agricultural market than to human health or would operate a deliberate policy of disinformation. In all our discussions our priority has been to give priority to transparency and to the scientific path and to avoid all risk to human health." He was replying to criticism of the commission's role in the crisis in a draft European Parliament report this week.

But while he insisted that the commission had acted with speed to handle the consequences of the outbreak in Britain, he accepted that the entire episode pointed to the need for change. The commisison president confirmed that responsibility for scientific veterinary advice would in future be passed from the agricultural to the consumer directorate in the commission.

Answering questions from MEPs, he said that he wanted the EU to set up an independent food agency, but he said that this was bitterly opposed by some national governments. "In the longer run, in my view, there is a strong case for going further and setting up a European drugs and food administration along the lines of the US body."

Asked about the way the commission had handled the entire BSE crisis and the subsequent export ban on British beef, Mr Santer said: "The worst thing we could have done would have been to deal with this affair on the basis of political considerations. To do so would have been to follow down the road taken by the British."

Relations with John Major and the British cabinet had reached an all-time low last year when the UK tried a policy of non co-operation to get the ban lifted. "Mr first conversation with Mr Major on BSE was more of a arguement on the telephone. I had a lot of differences with the British Government. I had a lot of threats but never did I make concessions. I refused time after time to give in to political blackmail ...

"There can be no lifting of the embargo — even a partial lifting — without the introduction of supplementary eradication measures by the United Kingdom."

'Thousands die' in CJD scenario

IT WILL take three to four years to find how large will be the epidemic of CJD, the human form of mad cow disease, *write Tim Radford and Chris Mihill.*

It could be a handful of cases a year — or deaths could run into thousands. The outcome is unknown because the incubation period has yet to be established.

A study by Peter Smith, of the Government's BSE advisory committee, and others, reported today in the magazine Nature, concludes that in a "worst case scenario" there might be up to 80,000 human infections in Britain arising from BSE beef. However, this was unlikely. So far it appeared there would only be a few cases.

Kohl ally curtails rights of migrants' children

Bonn cracks down on 'foreigners'

Ian Traynor in Bonn

HUNDREDS of thousands of foreign children in Germany, many of them born and bred here, had their visa and residence rights curbed yesterday under lightning regulations introduced as part of a multi-pronged crackdown on immigration.

The regulations, requiring the under-16 offspring of immigrants to obtain residence permits and introducing visa requirements for under-16s travelling to Germany, many of them to visit relatives, came into force two days after the interior minister, Manfred Kanther, announced the measures.

Bonn is also strengthening patrols on its eastern borders to combat illegal immigration from the former communist bloc, and increasing the number of inspectors trying to catch the thousands of foreigners working illegally on building sites in Berlin and east Germany.

Mr Kanther, Chancellor Helmut Kohl's Bavarian coalition ally, verges on blaming mass unemployment on immigrants.

Aid organisations, charities and even government officials condemned the measures.

"It is difficult to explain to the children or their parents why they need to get permission to stay in the country in which they were born and grew up," said Cornelia Schmalz-Jacobson, the government commissioner for foreigners.

Worried immigrants rushed to get their children into the country before yesterday's deadline. Bonn long ago waived visa requirements for under-16s from Turkey, Morocco, Tunisia and former Yugoslavia, to allow them to visit relatives for up to three months — a concession now ended.

But the most controversial measure is the imposition of residence requirements on children already here. Until yesterday, under-16s did not need residence papers, provided at least one parent was entitled to be in Germany.

"From now on, children who know no other homeland but Germany, who speak only German, and whose future is here, need regularly to ask for official permission to live in Germany," the Frankfurter Rundschau newspaper said.

Led by Mr Kanther, who regularly inveighs against immigration and says Germany must not become a "multicultural society", the crackdown coincides with the launch of 1997 as Europe's year of anti-racism.

Mr Kanther defended the curbs by saying that the number of unaccompanied minors entering Germany had almost quadrupled since 1990, to more than 2,000 last year. The residence permits requirement affects some 600,000 children in Germany, mainly Turks and ex-Yugoslavs.

He said parents were sending their children to Germany to boost their own chances of joining them later. Young girls were being brought in under the visa-free rules and forced into prostitution by unscrupulous relatives.

Bavaria's governing Christian Social Union (CSU) has linked record post-war unemployment of more than 4 million with record numbers of immigrants.

Michael Glos, the CSU caucus leader in the Bonn parliament, said it was "unacceptable that millions of our citizens are unemployed while more than a million work permits are issued to foreigners annually".

He called for social security offices to give preferential treatment to natives over foreigners when offering jobs, and for a five-year waiting period for work permits for non-European Union citizens entering Germany.



A student calls on Belgrade university's rector to resign for saying the student protests are manipulated by opposition parties. Yesterday a hardline Socialist Party member said the party would appeal against a ruling which restored the opposition's election victory in the city. Meanwhile Bulgaria's Socialist deputies, protected by riot police, left parliament early to avoid clashing with 10,000 protesters demanding their resignation

'Flexibility' the key to Britain relaxing EU veto

John Palmer in Strasbourg

THE Government is prepared to relax its opposition to any weakening of its veto in the European Union, in an attempt to reach an agreement on a new EU treaty this year, according to British sources here.

If all 15 members can agree precise rules for "flexibility" — under which groups of countries would be free to co-operate more closely without Britain necessarily taking part — London will not seek a veto over specific initiatives they take.

The Foreign Secretary, Malcolm Rifkind, will meet the Dutch foreign minister, Hans van Mierlo, the president of the Council of Ministers, in London today to try and narrow the gap with the EU over how flexibility will operate.

Mr Van Mierlo told the European Parliament in Strasbourg that agreement on flexibility could spell the difference between success and failure in the Maastricht treaty review negotiations.

"Flexibility will be the biggest key to success in the inter-governmental conference. It is time to give flexibility a concrete shape," he said.

But he warned: "It is a remedy we must apply sparingly, because an overdose could trigger the fragmentation of the Union."

John Major suggested last week that a flexibility accord would make it easier to agree a new treaty in Amsterdam this summer. France, Germany and other members insist that greater majority voting and other reforms are essential if the Union is to expand.

In theory, flexibility might apply across the board to all new EU policies. In practice, the focus is on proposals under which all members apart from Britain agree to transfer responsibility for asylum, immigration and border controls to Brussels, with a bigger role for the commission, the parliament and the European Court of Justice.

The Dutch presidency knows that the more progress that is made with the Tory government over the rules for flexibility, the easier it will be to complete a new treaty with a possible Labour government later this summer.

The Government insists that detailed safeguards for flexibility must first be agreed unanimously. These should include the right of countries to take part in specific initiatives, and assurances that flexibility does not threaten the single market, undermine the legal character of the Union, or oblige countries to take part eventually.

A British official in Strasbourg said yesterday that if this was agreed, Britain might "not seek to have a say in whether countries move to co-operate among themselves in specific and detailed areas. There need not be a veto at the secondary level."

Albanians fight police as pyramid scams topple

Joanna Robertson in Tirana

RIOT police clashed violently in the Albanian capital yesterday with protesters against the government's failure to intervene in collapsing pyramid money schemes.

Furious crowds tried to reach Skanderberg Square in the centre of Tirana, but were blocked by police cordons. They abused President Sali Berisha and the prime minister, Aleksander Meksi, shouting: "Sali is a thief, and so is Meksi too. Where have they put all our money?"

Others recalled the fall of the communist dictator Enver Hoxha: "We overthrew Hoxha, we can overthrow this government too."

The crowds gathered outside the depositing office of Maksude Kademi, a former shoe factory worker known as Sudja, who promised 50 per cent interest a month on cash deposits, but has failed to pay up. Some people threw stones at the police, who retaliated with batons.

Sudja's scheme is one of nine pyramid investment scams in which Albanians have been seduced into selling their homes, land and livestock. Thousands now depend on interest payments for their income.

A bank of Albania ruling, in effect since Monday, limits each company's daily cash withdrawals to about £200,000 — far short of the sums needed for repayments.

Homeless on 'Go' collect a chance

Alex Duval Smith in Paris

A GROUP of homeless men hope to take on the most popular board games, such as Monopoly and Cluedo, with a game they devised while they were in a hostel near Paris.

The game dispenses with the distractions of buying a hotel in Park Lane or trying to frame Colonel Mustard, and concentrates on the basics: players must scrape together enough money for a suit and a haircut, and find a job.

Called SDF — which stands for *Sans Domicile Fixe* (of no fixed abode) — the game has six players, including Alex, an unemployed hairdresser, and Jacques, a bank manager fallen on hard times.

Depending on a throw of the dice, the pieces may fall on good or bad times: they may be sent to hospital or, on the unluckiest square, die from hypothermia.

Ludovic Legentil, aged 21, is one of the residents of the Rame hostel in Mantes-La-Jolie who dreamed up the game.

"To create the six playing pieces, we pooled our stories and those of people we had met on the streets," he said. He came to Rame in September after losing his job, girlfriend and flat in quick succession.

"You meet all sorts of characters when you are homeless."

Plenty of recognisable institutions appear on the board. The most beneficial are "Secours Catholique, collect 200F" and "Red Cross, collect 100F", but players can quickly lose their money if they land on a fare-dodging square, which fines them 1,200F.

The Community Chest and Chance cards — known as Surprise and Letter box — can bring good news: "You've managed to swap a clothes parcel for a food parcel. Well done. Collect 50F."

Or they can ruin your day: "You were in an undeclared job and your employer never paid you. Settle your expenses by paying 200F."

The Rame hostel's director, Francis Mariette, aged 46, hopes the game, priced 179 francs (£19.95), will create several jobs for the unemployed.

"We have already invented another game and we are planning to issue a set of female playing pieces to go with SDF," he added.

He said there was a waiting list of 300 buyers for a special edition, priced at 500 francs (£56).

Volunteers from the hostel will package the first 100,000 games, which go on sale on April 7, in cardboard boxes bound with string.

SDF can be ordered from: SDF Par Le Jeu, BP 1507, 13 Rue des Closeaux, 78205 Mantes-La-Jolie Cedex, France

World news in brief

Lima hostage-takers agree to mediation

PERUVIAN rebels holding 74 hostages at the Japanese ambassador's residence in the capital Lima said yesterday that they accepted the government's proposal for a peace commission to mediate in the four-week-old crisis.

The announcement was made in a radio transmission after the rebels put a sign in a window of the residence telling a local television station to tune in.

It was the first response to the proposal made on Sunday by the government mediator Domingo Palermo, and the first sign of significant progress since seven hostages were freed on New Year's Day.

The transmission included remarks by a man identifying himself as Nestor Cerpa, the leader of the Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement rebels holding the hostages. The rebels said everything must be up for discussion, including their main demand — rejected by President Alberto Fujimori — that Peru should free hundreds of their jailed comrades.

A man who said he was the Peruvian foreign minister Francisco Tudela, one of the hostages, said all were healthy and in good spirits. — *AP, Lima.*

Snowstorms kill 34 in China

THE fiercest snowstorms for 30 years have blanketed parts of China's western Xinjiang region, killing at least 34 people and nearly a million sheep and cutting off 100,000 residents, officials said yesterday.

More snow is expected, after a month of snowstorms in the Altay mountains on the border with Mongolia, and temperatures of minus 36C, the officials said.

Most of the dead were herders. Many residents of the sparsely populated region are nomads who raise cattle, goats or sheep for a living. — *Reuter, Beijing.*

Stowaways thrown from ship

ONE man disappeared and 11 were washed ashore on an island near Cape Town after being thrown off a ship as stowaways and drifting two days on a makeshift raft, survivors said yesterday.

The men — eight from Nigeria and four from Ghana — were thrown off the Taiwanese ship on Sunday and clung to six empty oil drums tied together as a raft before swimming for shore on Tuesday. One, a Nigerian, disappeared and was presumed drowned. The other 11 were found on Dyer Island off South Africa's southwest coast by a nature conservation official and airlifted to a prison near Cape Town, where police said they would be held until they could be sent home.

The men said they had paid about £1,200 each to the captain of the Taiwanese cargo ship to travel on the ship. He had later changed his mind and forced the men, some of whom could not swim, on to the raft. — *AP, Cape Town.*

Yeltsin's health still at risk

THE Kremlin's chief physician admitted yesterday that Boris Yeltsin had been "fairly seriously" ill with double pneumonia, which could entail complications for his heart condition.

Sergei Mironov said that the Russian president's medical team had managed to avert a condition in which his lungs filled up with fluid, putting a heavy strain on the heart. Mr Yeltsin's condition had stabilised considerably, but he needed to spend longer in hospital and recuperate for at least three weeks, he said. Ten days ago, when Mr Yeltsin was taken ill, he was said to be suffering from a heavy cold. — *David Hearst, Moscow.*

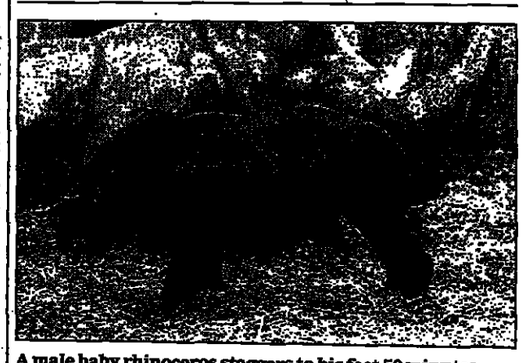
Ciller millions in the clear

A PARLIAMENTARY committee in Ankara dropped a case against the former Turkish prime minister Tansu Ciller yesterday, finding no evidence that she had done wrong in accumulating $50 million (£30 million).

A vote against her would have stripped her of her cabinet positions as deputy prime minister and foreign minister, and opened the way for prosecution. After six months of investigation, the panel voted 8-7 in her favour. Mrs Ciller did not testify in front of the commission but sent written statements, which have not been made public.

The committee's five members from the Islamic Welfare party, the senior coalition party, supported her, although it was their party which asked for the investigation in April, before the formation of the coalition with Mrs Ciller's centre-right True Path party. Opposition deputies accused Welfare and True Path deputies of trying to prevent a serious investigation.

Detractors alleged that the great bulk of the Ciller family's wealth came from illegal bank dealings conducted by her husband, who ran a private bank which collapsed. Mrs Ciller says she built up their fortune from a few hundred thousand dollars inherited from her father. She still faces two other parliamentary investigations, one into alleged misuse of a state-run hotel, the other concerning a slush fund. — *AP, Ankara.*



A male baby rhinoceros staggers to his feet 50 minutes after being born to Natala in the Kolmarden zoo, 100 miles from Stockholm

PHOTOGRAPH: LEIF HALLBERG

Russia apologises for oil spill

ONE of Japan's most severe oil spills worsened yesterday as fuel oil seeping from the sunken part of the Russian tanker Nakhodka added to slicks that have fouled much of Japan's west coast.

As coast guard officials increased their estimate of the spill to 1.3 million gallons, the Russian ambassador to Japan apologised. "This is a dreadful, regrettable thing. I apologise for such tremendous damage and destruction." Alexander Panov said during his first visit to the damaged areas.

The tanker is still leaking, and is thought still to hold three times the spilled amount, a coast guard spokesman, Shinji Sato, said. — *AP, Tokyo.*

Parents sue Boy Scouts

THE parents of four boys are suing the American Boy Scouts for $72 million (£47 million), claiming older campers sodomised their sons with a broomstick at a summer camp.

The boys, aged between six and 10, were assaulted last August after being lured, one at a time, into a cabin at Camp Keowa in Narrowsburg, according to the lawsuit filed on Monday.

"I'm totally outraged that the Boy Scout camp did not watch my six-year-old," Denise Palmer said. Mary Riley said she was told her son had been injured during "horseplay" with a broom.

A local newspaper reported in September that two boys aged 13 had been arrested in the case. — *AP, New York.*

Sad find in Roman brothel

A CACHE of babies' skeletons beneath a bathhouse probably points to a Roman brothel in the biblical city of Ashkelon nearly 2,000 years ago, Israeli archaeologists said yesterday.

Ariella Oppenheim and colleagues at the Hebrew University said the 100 or so skeletons found in a sewer on Israel's south coast were not victims of the Roman practise of female infanticide.

"The significant number of male victims ... raised the intriguing possibility that these infants may have been the unwanted offspring of courtesans working in the bathhouse," they wrote to the journal Nature. — *Reuter, London.*

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IAN BLACK on the Hebron deal

Likud cabinet set to cross Rubicon

ISRAEL'S Likud government was poised last night to overcome its doubts about ideology and security and vote to continue pullbacks from the West Bank.

But the prime minister, Binyamin Netanyahu, faced fury from rightwingers as troops prepared to leave most of Hebron and hand over to Yasser Arafat's security forces by the weekend.

Palestinians were jubilant that a Likud leader was ready, for the first time, to surrender parts of the biblical land of Israel — a process begun by the murdered Labour prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in his 1993 Oslo pact with the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

"We are glad we have finalised the Hebron deal," said Mr Arafat's deputy, Mohammed Abbas. "It is the first agreement we have signed with the Likud. We hope this will be the beginning of more."

One far-right Israeli MP, Benny Eilon, said: "This is a black day. When Netanyahu looks back he will be ashamed. Israelis should remember that war with Egypt, with Syria, with Arafat, is very close."

Hebron, like other West Bank towns already evacuated, was captured by Israel in the war of June 1967. But the 450 extremist settlers who will stay under special security arrangements mean its days as a powder keg are far from over.

Last night's cabinet decision — expected to be carried by a majority of 11 to seven — underlines the Israeli government's explicit but grudging commitment to continuing the Oslo process, even as doubts about how much further it will go increase.

Agreement was reached in a low-key meeting between Mr Arafat and Mr Netanyahu — with the United States mediator, Dennis Ross, wielding intense pressure — in the small hours of the morning at the Erez crossing point between Israel and Gaza.

Implementation of the agreement on Hebron, always due for special treatment because of holy places common to Muslims and Jews, was held up because of Palestinian insistence that it must be linked to the tougher question of three further Israeli redeployments.

> 'When Netanyahu looks back, he will be ashamed. War is very close'

These in turn are linked to currently suspended final status talks on such core issues as Israeli settlements, Palestinian sovereignty, borders, refugees and Jerusalem. These talks are to resume two months after the Hebron pullback.

In a stormy cabinet debate, Mr Netanyahu insisted that he had used weeks of American mediation to secure the right to decide unilaterally the extent of Israeli redeployment in the third and final stage of the pullbacks — due to completed by mid-1998.

But a close reading of a letter from the US secretary of state, Warren Christopher, did not support this interpretation. Mr Netanyahu was repeatedly attacked by Benny Begin, his minister of science and son of the late prime minister Menachem Begin, who accused him of deliberately misleading ministers to secure their votes.

"The prime minister is committed to handing over parts of the Jewish homeland," Mr Begin sneered. "Some people might say this is necessary to get something in return ... but he's getting absolutely zero from Arafat."

Yitzhak Shamir, another former Likud prime minister, said Mr Netanyahu had betrayed the ideals of the nationalist camp.

But the opposition Labour Party was jubilant at Mr Netanyahu's "conversion" to Oslo — even though many believe he is simply manoeuvring to resist further pressure.

Angry demonstrators carrying black flags gathered outside Mr Netanyahu's office as the cabinet meeting dragged on. Settlers held emergency meetings and continued lobbying wavering ministers to oppose the deal. Hebron itself was quiet as plainclothes Palestinian security agents fanned out.

Military sources said the army needed 48 hours to complete its withdrawal to the 20 per cent of the city Israel is to retain. The redeployment could take place after the Knesset votes today.

Amos Oz, page 9



Hebrew graffiti in Jerusalem brands prime minister Binyamin Netanyahu a traitor for signing a deal with the PLO PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILVERMAN

What Israel and the Palestinians have actually agreed

Four documents were signed by Israeli, Palestinian and United States officials in the early hours of yesterday morning:

Protocol concerning the redeployment in Hebron Details civilian and security arrangements such as the number of Palestinian policemen (400) and the weapons they can use. Virtually identical to agreement reached months ago. Novelty is that Palestinians can form "rapid response teams" to suppress unrest.

US plan on Al-Shuhada (Martyrs) Street in central Hebron Lists US-financed security arrangements in currently closed road next to settlers' buildings. New traffic island, dividing wall and "planting small trees, shrubs and flowers".

American "Note for the Record" Lists commitments by Netanyahu and Arafat on non-Hebron issues. "The two leaders agreed that the Oslo peace process must move forward to succeed." First phase of three more Israeli redeployments in first week of March. Lists outstanding issues: complete revision of Palestine National Charter; release of Palestinian prisoners; safe passage between West Bank and Gaza. Permanent status talks to resume within two months of Hebron pullback.

Letter from the US secretary of state Warren Christopher to Netanyahu Israeli redeployments to end "not later than mid-1998". Implies support of Israel's view of what constitute "specified military locations", which Israel wants to exempt from further withdrawals. But critics said the letter — which more generally conveys "iron-clad" support for Israel's security — is virtually meaningless.

Dope shop takes pot luck with US tolerance

Christopher Reed in Los Angeles

TO THE irritation of officialdom and the delight of devotees of the magic weed, the Cannabis Buyers' Club gave new meaning to the term drugstore when it reopened in San Francisco yesterday, selling marijuana legally for the first time in the United States in 60 years.

But the 3.5-gram packets — priced from $5 to $60 (about £3 to £37) depending on quality — and cannabis-laced cakes and pesto sauce were available only to buyers needing it for their health.

Clients had to produce a doctor's letter, and club staff followed up with a telephone call before issuing an identity card with a photograph.

The extra precautions were taken because of the raid last August by the California state attorney-general, which shut down the club. It had been selling cannabis illegally — but under a policy of city tolerance — for five years to a total of 11,000 sick people.

In November California's electorate voted for Proposition 215, to decriminalise the drug for medical purposes, and this month a judge allowed the club to reopen.

The club's founder, Dennis Peron, ceremonially handed the first purchase to an Aids patient, one of 200 ill people the club had already registered. But the federal government has warned that cannabis is still illegal under federal law, and doctors who assist patients may be prosecuted. Critics of the Californian policy include the White House drug chief, General Barry McCaffrey.

But Mr Peron and his associates are pressing on. They recently visited the pot-tolerant Netherlands to study glasshouse and hydroponic growing techniques, and already sprouts of *Cannabis sativa* are poking up in the club's basement less than a mile from San Francisco's city hall.

Sudan rebels advance

Kathy Evans, and Reuter in Khartoum

CONVOYS of Sudanese troops rumbled into the Blue Nile town of Damazin yesterday to reinforce army units caught short by four days of attacks near strategic towns along the country's eastern borders.

Sudanese opposition forces fighting the fundamentalist Islamic government said they had advanced to within 50 miles of Damazin and were pressing on with the offensive. They said they had taken two border towns south-east of Damazin and an army garrison near the eastern town of Kassala.

The rebel advance poses the most serious threat to the regime in its eight-year history.

Damazin, although 300 miles from the capital, Khartoum, is the site of two dams which supply 80 per cent of the electricity for Sudan's national grid. Kassala is on the road to Port Sudan, the country's only seaport.

Sudan yesterday accused its neighbour Eritrea of taking part in the offensive, saying it had lost seven of its own soldiers and killed 200 Eritrean troops in battles near their border.

In the past few days Khartoum has also accused the government of Ethiopia of being behind the rebel offensive, and has declared an all-out mobilisation against the "Ethiopian invasion".

The government has been trying unsuccessfully to whip up support through mass demonstrations and rallies in the streets of the capital.

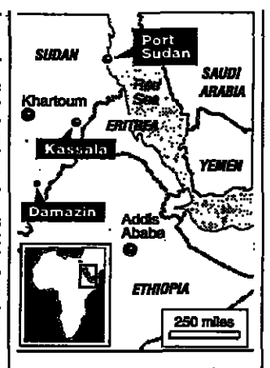
Rebel spokesmen said they hoped the current offensive would spark an uprising in the capital by civilians and army officers.

Khartoum's government is headed by a military officer, General Omar Bashir, but is backed by the National Islamic Front, led by Hassan Turabi.

Khartoum's forces are facing the most co-ordinated and best equipped offensive yet launched by rebel groups. Departing from the previous strategy of hit-and-run attacks, the rebels now have tanks and mortars.

Until recently the battle against Khartoum was fought largely in the south by the Sudan Popular Liberation Army, headed by John Garang.

This time Sudanese opposition parties have joined the offensive, and it is backed by Eritrea. Another group of former Sudanese army officers, led by Brigadier Abdul Azziz Khalid Othman, has also joined the offensive.



Survivors face Rwandan war butcher in court

Chris McGreal in Kigali

FRODUALD Karamira's voice struck terror into Tutsis as his call to murder pounded across Rwanda's airwaves nearly three years ago. To many he was the worst kind of scoundrel — a Tutsi who reinvented himself as a Hutu and became a fanatic to prove his loyalty.

This week Mr Karamira was back on Rwandan radio. But this time it was from a Kigali courtroom, where fear gave way to derision as he sought to save his skin. He was among 28 men on trial in Rwanda at the start of the first major hearings into the 1994 genocide of hundreds of thousands of Tutsis.

As a former head of one of the extreme Hutu political factions — united under the label "Power" — and as a leader of the militias which led the killing, Mr Karamira heads a list of nearly 2,000 people facing execution by firing squad if convicted. Another 80,000 alleged killers are crammed into Rwanda's jails, where they are likely to remain for years.

> 'Karamira is the one who killed my husband and 26 of our neighbours

Mr Karamira is accused of orchestrating the genocide with his daily broadcasts, and of personally leading the murders of hundreds of Tutsis. He nearly eluded justice after fleeing to India, and then attempting to escape at an Ethiopian airport during his deportation. But he bungled it and landed in the Kigali court, dressed in a bright pink prison uniform.

There his slogans were thrown back at him. The spectators chanted "Power" and laughed as a parade of witnesses laid the groundwork for his execution.

As the first witnesses were called to summarise their accusations, Mr Karamira stood uncomfortably close by. A man listed all the members of his family allegedly murdered at Mr Karamira's behest. They included his wife, five children, mother, four sisters and two nephews. Mr Karamira did not flinch.

Most of the witnesses did not look directly at him. Some spoke in broken voices. A few were defiant. A woman walked to the stand, turned and shouted: "Karamira, Froduald. I accuse you." An old man began an elaborate denunciation of him for killing his children. The judge interrupted to say the time for detail would come later.

Another witness, from the moderate wing of Mr Karamira's old political party, turned on his former political ally. "Power," he shouted derisively into the prisoner's face. The spectators roared.

One group of witnesses was not on hand. A lawyer stepped forward to speak for the children who will tell how Mr Karamira led the extermination of their parents.

A woman witness, aged 40, who declined to give her name for fear of attack by Hutu extremists, sat not far behind the defendant.

"Karamira is the one who killed my husband and 26 people among our neighbours," she said. "I want him to be shot. From independence until 1994, people killed without being judged. It's a long time. For the first time they are being judged."

Justice is not the survivors' only demand. They also want compensation. After he became a Hutu, Mr Karamira rose swiftly to political and financial prominence. Buildings registered in his name are scattered across Kigali. The relatives of those he murdered want the court to distribute the assets.

Mr Karamira's lawyer, Paul Kato Atita, only arrived from Benin on Saturday. He complained to the judges that he had barely had time to look at the charges and witness statements. He wanted a 15-day adjournment.

"If the court rejects my lawyers request it is denying me my human rights," Mr Karamira argued. The spectators jeered and the prosecution objected to the motion.

But the judges granted the request. It added another fortnight to what is assumed to be Mr Karamira's short life expectancy.

In all, 21 people have been indicted by the tribunal, of whom seven are in custody in Arusha.



A woman activist of the Pakistan Muslim League welcomes the party's leader, Nawaz Sharif, to a rally in Khairpur, Sind province, yesterday in the run-up to the February 3 general election PHOTOGRAPH: MUZAMMIL PASHA

'Graft inquiry' ousted colony's mandarin

Tan Ee Lyn in Hong Kong

HONG KONG grappled with a growing scandal yesterday as the government said that it ousted its immigration chief last July after corruption investigators found he had undisclosed business links.

The secretary of the colony's civil service, Lam Woon-kwong, told a legislative council inquiry that an anti-corruption investigation had shown the former immigration director, Laurence Leung, had secret shareholdings, a business relationship with a legislator and shares in a Chinese enterprise, and had failed to repay a government housing loan.

He said Mr Leung had used a £150,000 housing loan to buy property in Canada which he sold without informing the government.

Mr Lam's testimony cast new light on Mr Leung's sudden resignation last July, but sceptical council members believe there may be more to come. The chief secretary, Anson Chan, the colony's second-ranking official, was called to testify next week and the governor, Chris Patten, may be called later.

Mr Lam dismissed as "baseless" reports that Mr Leung had been ousted for spying for China. "It has to do with his character," he told the legislative council inquiry panel.

Mr Leung, aged 55, spent 31 years in the civil service and held a highly sensitive post with strong security implications in the period leading to China's takeover on July 1. He was responsible for issuing passports and visas.

Mr Leung had a business partnership with a legislator who serves on Beijing-appointed organisations managing Hong's Kong's handover to China, and had lost £8,500 in an abortive advertising venture in China. Mr Lam said. Both these deals should have been reported to the security authorities.

Mr Lam's statement came after six months of conspiracy theories from politicians and the media, and allegations of a cover-up. At first both Mr Leung and the government said he had retired for "personal reasons". Mr Leung said these reasons included grief at his daughter's murder in Canada three years ago. But he told the inquiry last week that he had been forced to quit.

While the investigation by the Independent Commission Against Corruption had failed to prove suspicions of criminal offences by Mr Leung, Mr Lam said ,the inquiry had raised questions about his conduct. "He could not pass the integrity test."

Legislators were unimpressed by the government's explanation for its loss of faith in Mr Leung, who was given less than a day to resign or be sacked.

Song's gay twist strikes a chord

Ian Katz in New York

WHEN he sat down at the piano in September, Jimmy Lewis planned to write a blues number on traditional "man-woman relationship turns bad" lines.

But working on the first verse, the veteran Los Angeles songwriter found himself singing: "There are no words to describe what I felt inside, when I found out the man I loved loved another guy."

Now the unconventional twist to his song has turned it into a surprise hit. Radio stations throughout the country are being deluged with requests for the track, performed by Sixties singer Peggy Scott-Adams.

"All the stations have to do is play it once and their switchboards light up," said Warren Hildebrand of Mardi Gras Records, the small New Orleans company distributing it.

Entitled Bill, the name of "the other man", Mr Lewis's lyrics begin with the warning: "Girls I am about to tell you something you may want to know. You know things are not always what they appear to be, and I don't want to happen to you what happened to me."

Ms Scott-Adams, who had three hits in the late 1960s, then sings that she could not find her man at a party. "I walked outside, I couldn't believe my eyes, he was in Bill's arms breathing hard and French kissing."

Bill has not been released as a single, but more than 100,000 copies of Ms Scott-Adams's album have been sold in the past eight weeks, enough to send it soaring up the rhythm and blues charts.

Mr Lewis, who has written songs for Ray Charles, Rita Coolidge and Bobby Womack, says the song has struck a chord among gay and straight Americans because many have been in the same position.

Mr Lewis stresses that he is not gay and has never been spurned by a gay partner.

In the final verse, Ms Scott-Adams sings of her shock at her discovery.

"As tears came to my eyes, he said 'I'm sorry I hurt you so, but I've got to pack, Bill's waiting for me, and oh girl I've got to go'."

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Ban all of these mines

Princess Di is right to take the Red Cross line

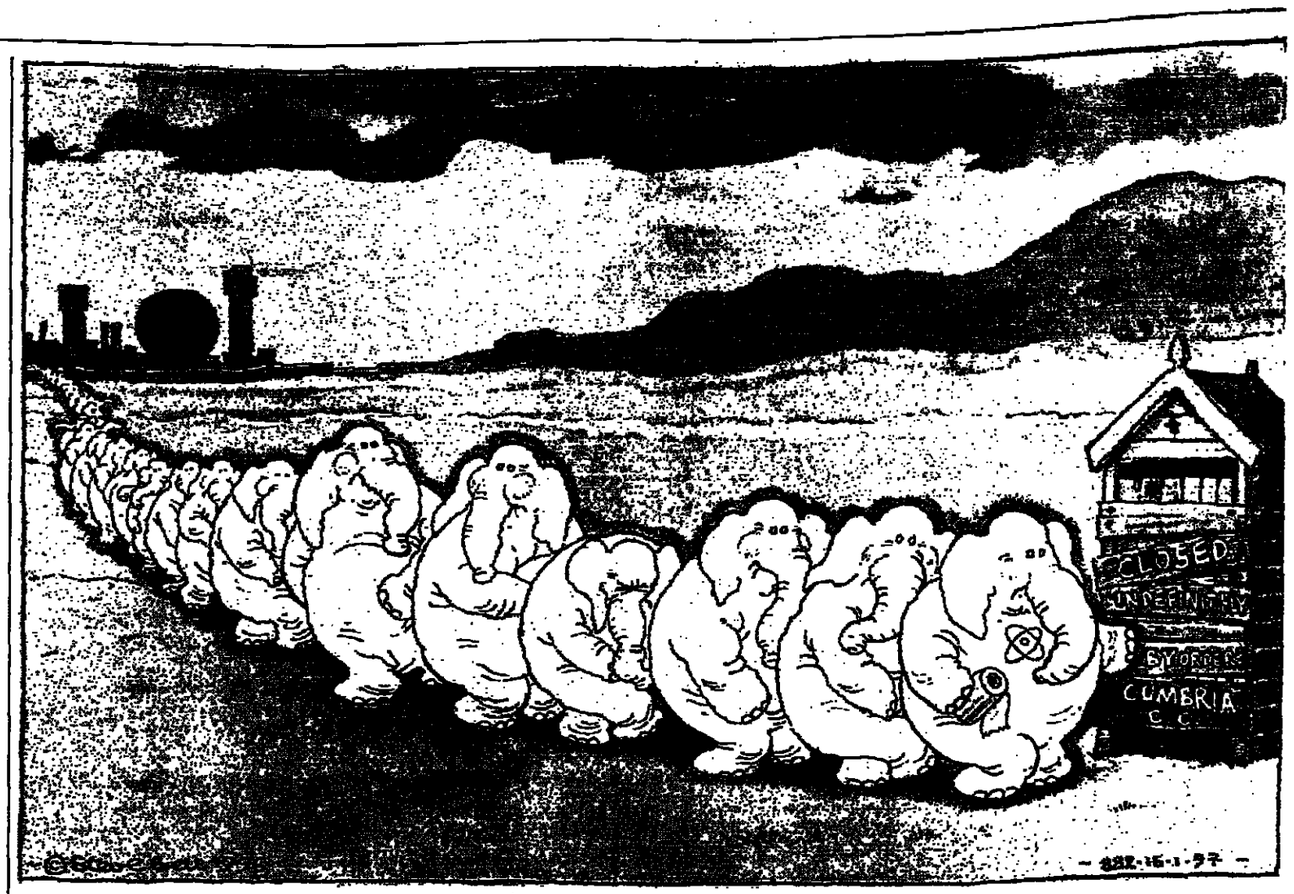
EXPLODING a political bomb back at home may prove to be Princess Diana's most valuable contribution to the campaign against landmines. It can hardly have been her intention. She was in Angola to publicise the efforts of the Red Cross in this field, and the Red Cross (along with every NGO from Oxfam to Unicef) seeks a total ban on these vicious anti-personnel weapons. If she was to put forward any "line" then, having accepted the Red Cross invitation, it should have been — as it was — their line. It would have been patently absurd if, after endorsing a worldwide ban, she had parroted the British government's waiver. Was she really supposed to add a qualifying sentence? "Nothing I have said, with the greatest respect, should be interpreted as criticising British policy to reserve the right to use such mines in 'exceptional circumstances' till a ban is agreed — and only destroy 46 per cent of its current stock." That would have made her not the Queen of Hearts but the Knave of Humphrey-talk.

Yet it is unlikely that Princess Diana had any conscious idea of causing a stir. She could hardly have guessed that an obscure Tory minister would sound off against her, while sharing the kind of meal in a smart Westminster restaurant which would pay for three or four artificial limbs. She is much more likely to have been moved by a few of the everyday tales of human tragedy which she was witnessing. Like that of 16-year-old Rosaline Domingos who lost her baby after stepping on a mine and now has tetanus as well as a stump. Assurances that some of our mines, unlike the one which ruined Rosaline's life, are really quite "smart", may sound a shade less convincing on the spot. Even if the technology were perfect, such mines are still lethal within their "live" period or will require skilled detection to be cleared safely.

But the issue does not really hang on technology: it is ultimately one of principle. More than 40 countries, including several European ones, have already declared a unilateral ban on the future production as well as use of landmines. By a strange coincidence all the main producers, including Britain, have failed to do so. David Howell, chairman of the Commons foreign affairs select committee, yesterday offered some patronising advice to the Princess: public figures in her position, he said, should realise that "things are not straightforward." Actually they are perfectly straightforward. As many military figures (including General Norman Schwarzkopf) now accept, landmines are of dubious military utility and cause unacceptable human suffering. Either Britain gives them up or it doesn't.

Downing Street was doing its best yesterday to defuse the row. Both the government and the Red Cross, it said, share the same "ultimate aim" of achieving an international ban on anti-personnel mines. And so the Princess's comments were entirely in keeping with everyone's policies. This does not meet the argument of those in the front line of this nasty business: anti-personnel mines have to be stigmatised and only a comprehensive ban can work.

In the past it was those who called for total bans on various weapons of destruction who were stigmatised as naive at best, pro-communist at worst. That will no longer suffice to sidestep the argument. If only for expedient reasons, Downing Street was right to back off. The defence strategists may not like it but public opinion (plus quite a few ex-generals) is moving towards a more absolutist view, whether on mines or nuclear weapons. The author of this little row said yesterday she was just trying to help. Thank you, Ma'am: and please keep it up.



Carry on expanding

But raise taxes not interest rates

BRITAIN'S unemployment figures are in such a mess that they have almost ceased to be an economic indicator. The latest ones published yesterday show that the number of people claiming unemployment benefit fell by 45,100 to 1.884 million in December, following falls of 95,400 and 45,600 in the two previous months. To the extent this demonstrates a genuine reduction it reflects well on the Government's recent economic policy and on its earlier moves to make labour markets more "flexible". The trouble is the figures have been distorted by the Job Seeker's Allowance which withdrew benefits from lots of unemployed people unable to satisfy the Government's stiff test for job searching.

It is easy to be cynical about a government that has been in power 17 years suddenly introducing measures to remove tens of thousands of people from the claimant count shortly before a general election. Especially when it to publish regular figures from the more reliable Labour Force Survey which give the politically unpalatable news that unemployment was 302,000 higher in November (when the last count was taken) than the claimant figures. But let that pass. It is bad enough to fiddle the figures but even worse to take the wrong economic decisions as a result of the message they signal. The fact that unemployment is coming down so fast is bound to be seized on by the Bank of England and others as evidence that interest rates should be raised.

This would be a really silly response. There is no evidence of worsening inflation beyond the slight rise that often accompanies a business upswing. Earnings have risen by only 0.75 percentage points (to 4 per cent) over the past 16 months and there are plenty of job vacancies. With technological forces still acting in a deflationary manner there is every reason to allow expansion to continue to test whether it is possible to get unemployment down to 5 per cent or below without rekindling inflation.

If any action is necessary it should be done by raising taxes to cool the pre-electoral spending spree and not by higher interest rates which could threaten the long-awaited revival of manufacturing investment and keep the pound at its present unacceptably high level. Unemployment in East Anglia is now down to 5.2 per cent — as it is in the United States — without any obvious sign of a prices explosion. Also the national average of unemployment (6.7 per cent) conceals a female unemployment rate of 3.7 per cent while that for males (whose behaviour in the labour market is more inflationary than women) is still over 9 per cent. Given that the official figures are understating unemployment as we used to know it, the sensible course is to let the economic expansion now underway carry on to see whether we really are entering a new era of low inflation. It would be a tragedy if we were but we never took advantage of it.

An alternative to Howard's way

Hurd's liberalism will be needed under Labour as well as now

IF HE had put it in one of his novels, Douglas Hurd might have tested his readers' credulity: from Home Secretary to chairman of a leading penal reform group. In a world which has seen too many ministers moving far too smoothly from government to city or industrial groups which they were earlier regulating, it is refreshing to see one who has gone to the city but is still ready to pursue public service through pressure group work. Good for Hurd. His liberal voice on penal affairs is not only needed with the current administration — it looks like being just as crucial under Labour.

Being a prison minister works. Or it did until Michael Howard. A long line of ministers passed through the Home Office and came out wiser people. Most were not "captured" by their officials. They were too tough-minded for that. Rather, they were ready to listen, look and learn. All who did so, quickly saw the simplistic slogans of the soap box don't get far with such a complex issue as crime. Douglas Hurd was not afraid to confess he had a lot to learn when he became Home Secretary. He was a fast learner and quickly grasped and accepted the strategy which finally emerged in 1991 — a strategy which Michael Howard subsequently tore up. Howard is the exception: a man who refuses to listen to the professionals he controls — prison governors, police researchers, probation chiefs — placing narrow party interest before the national interest. Hurd's move is important for three reasons: his snub to Howard; his demonstration that political leadership requires ministers to educate, rather than to pander, to public prejudice; and his recognition that penal affairs is more than just a left of centre issue. As Churchill noted, there is no better test of a civilisation than the state of a nation's prisons.

Letters to the Editor

The police face charges

THE letter from ACPO (January 15) outlining the chief constables' reasons for supporting the Police Bill perfectly illustrates why so many people are concerned. They say it would be unlawful to listen to conversations between solicitor and client or between peaceful protesters, but both examples were followed by the disingenuous caveat "on those grounds alone". But other grounds are widely drawn. As the Bill stands, if any chief constable thought it would be operationally useful to listen to the telephone of someone who might have something to do with a march, he could authorise a tap. That is because any protest or march gives rise to a least a risk of a minor public-order offence, such as alarming a bystander, and any conduct by a large number of persons is defined as "serious crime".

Accountants and bankers are equally vulnerable to a wide police interpretation of what might be of "substantial value in detecting ... an offence ... which ... results in substantial financial gain", if they are advising on, for example, the difference between a legal or illegal tax-avoidance scheme. A tap, which is done electronically at the exchange, would record all conversations.

Contrary to the implication in the ACPO letter, the Bill is so worded as to make nothing unlawful, and provides no redress for improper application of the powers. There needs to be tighter definitions, strict judicial control, and rules to deal with the disposal of irrelevant material.
Hugo Charlton.
Green Party Law Officer,
1 Waterlow Road,
London N19 5NJ.

TO say that solicitors' and barristers' offices would be "bugged" only if they were suspected of "discussing corrupt acts" is tantamount to saying: "we will bug lawyers' offices when we like and justify it by claiming a suspicion". The police have always used the "Ways and Means Act", referred to as "existing activity" in the letter, and the codification of these unauthorised practices would simply serve to encourage the police to extend their covert activity beyond the limit that is currently acceptable to the courts and result in another letter from ACPO in a few years time seeking to put the "existing activity on a statutory basis ..."
T Alex Shaw.
32 Albert Street,
Sandford Hill,
Longton,
Stoke on Trent.
Staffs ST3 5ED.

WHERE is the evidence for the chief constables' belief that solicitors, and presumably barristers, would allow their offices to be used by armed robbers to plan their next raid? Additionally, "suspicion that a riot was being planned" is wide open to the misuse of police powers. All these powerful coppers will have to do better than that to prove their democratic credentials to win support for an iniquitous Bill.
E H Dare.
21 Ibbetson Path,
Loughton,
Essex IG10 2AS.

JUST because "the police service has been using evidence covertly obtained since 1829" is not a sufficient reason for not now having a fully independent process of judicial approval for such bugging measures.

The police will always have an incentive to over-use bugging to help tackle crime and to make their own job easier. A requirement for judicial review of this process is surely the right approach and, provided a speedy mechanism for decision-making is put in place, there should be no threat to the efficiency of legitimate police work.
David Laws.
1 Braeside Cottages,
Cullings Hill,
Elham, Kent CT4 6TE.

Why the Queen of Hearts has come up trumps in Angola

THE Princess of Wales is quite right to support a total ban on anti-personnel mines (Diana in a minefield, January 15). It is no surprise that her stand has provoked criticism from unattributable ministers.

The UK Government's position is out of line with much of the rest of the world. The UK doesn't want to see a ban on these weapons, even though they are indiscriminate, barbaric and quite probably illegal (under international humanitarian law). Much of the evidence suggests anti-personnel mines are no longer of great military utility and can very rarely be justified on the battlefield given their appalling human and social impact.

Arguing for smart mines, as the Government does, is both disingenuous and short-sighted and demonstrate how little it appears to understand of the real issues. Adding smart mines won't solve the problem. They don't always work and are far too expensive to persuade the likes of Angola to replace their stocks with. When will we see cabinet ministers in the minefields and hospitals of Angola?
Tim Carstairs.
Co-ordinator, UK Working Group on Landmines.
601 Holloway Road,
London N19 4DJ.

YOU report that the Government is committed to "an eventual worldwide ban on mines". "Eventual" will not help the 26,000 people who die or lose one or more limbs each year. "Eventual" will continue to leave land barren as people are too scared to farm in a world scattered with 100 million landmines. And "eventual" has so far cost the UK public £21 million in trying to clear these horrific left-overs of war. Surely the "smart" way forward is a total, worldwide ban?
Nigel Twose.
Director of Programme Development, Actionaid.
Hamlyn House,
Macdonald Road,
London N19 5PG.

LOSING a limb is awful. It is made worse by living in a community where medical and rehabilitation services are minimal. However, no-one seems to mention another problem. Many of these individuals will develop phantom limb pain. They have the prospect of going through the rest of their lives, not only with the physical deformity, but also with shooting pains going down into the tip of the limb like electric shocks. Maybe some are luckier and will only have an itching sensation in that absent toe — that they cannot scratch and that never goes away.
(Dr) William Notcutt.
James Paget Hospital,
Lowestoft Road,
Great Yarmouth,
Norfolk NR31 6LA.

THE Government's position on this issue has long been a source of shame to myself and, I am sure, many of my fellow citizens. It has shown a consistent unwillingness to endorse any ban on landmines, exercised a veto on such a ban two years ago and, last May, insisted on altering the wording of an anti-mines protocol so as to weaken its effect.

Such actions are consistent with this government's permissive attitude towards the arms trade, including that in implements which end up as instruments of torture. I am glad to see that New Labour has declared itself in favour of a complete ban on landmines; what I hope is that New Labour, if elected to government, would support conversion schemes for those companies dependent on weapons manufacturing, and would work within the EU to create an unhealthy climate for those whose trade profits from human misery and destruction.
Ann Pettitt.
Gwastod Bach,
Llanpumsaint,
Carmarthen,
Dyfed SA33 6LH.

THOSE who accuse Princess Diana of supporting Labour whenever she happens to disagree with the Government ought to remember not only that we live in a free country, but also that we have more than one opposition party. Your report recalls, as an example of the Princess allegedly supporting Labour, her visit to Centrepoint in 1995. On that occasion her speech was in favour of restoring benefits to 16- and 17-year-olds. She was supporting a Liberal Democrat policy and can only have embarrassed Jack Straw, who was sitting beside her.
Lord Russell.
Liberal Democrat Social Security Spokesman.
House of Lords,
London SW1A 0AA.

We may edit letters: shorter ones are more likely to appear. We regret we cannot acknowledge those not used.

Continental drift

JOHN Palmer reports remarkably uncritically (Nato and Kremlin skirmishing, January 14) a briefing from "a Nato diplomat" on eastern enlargement. The idea that Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania will be awarded early membership of the EU as a "compensation" for not being allowed to join Nato is one that American diplomats have long promoted.

The parallel enlargement of Nato and the EU to include former Warsaw Pact countries is one of the most important and complex issues facing West European countries. We are drifting, under American pressure, towards expanding Nato within the next two years, with American officials offering both Russia and East European countries a range of concessions in order to make expansion to three or four countries acceptable to those left out.

If successful, this will transform the European economy and European security over the next ten years. American suggestions that EU member states will pay the costs of enlargement, and offer second-class security guarantees through EU membership to states which the US does not want in Nato, only worsen the high degree of confusion within the two organisations about how best to handle eastern enlargement without unnecessarily antagonising Russia.
Lord Wallace of Saltatre.
House of Lords,
London SW1A 0AA.



Literature, a dirty business

LES Murray's winning of the T S Eliot prize brings mixed feelings (Surprise winner of Eliot award, January 14). His latest books show great warmth towards nature and at least a tolerance of mankind, often expressed in exact and brilliantly original language.

However, much of his work over the previous 20 years consists of clotted rant against the modern world. Some poems express the view of the extreme libertarian right, such as that road tolls cause deaths (The Road Toll) and that liberalism is a disease. These views are Murray's business, although the poems tend to be terrible. But sometimes his bile tips over into the unacceptable, as in the use of a Vietnamese name as onomatopoeia for spitting (On Removing Spiderweb) and the jaunty gloating about Aids in The Fall Of Aphrodite Street and Midnight Lake.

Murray may yet win the Nobel Prize but, like Eliot's anti-semitism, these will remain a permanent distraction from his reputation. Is there a case, even for a poet, for retraction and apology?
Laurie Smith.
Magma poetry magazine.
The City Lit,
Stukeley Street, Drury Lane,
London WC2B 5LJ.

SALMAN Rushdie's ex-wife, Marianne Wiggins, accuses him of being self-obsessed and not supporting other authors in danger because of their writings (Author Wiggins bankrupt, January 15). A recent number (January 1996) of the French journal, La Règle du Jeu, had as its lead article a piece by Guy Scarpetta on literature under trial, including the cases of Carlos Fuentes and Pierre Mertens (facing court action over their works) and Gunter Grass (under trial by media for his novel on German unification). One of the members of this journal's editorial committee is none other than Salman Rushdie.
Christopher Rollason.
17, avenue Foch,
57000 Metz, France.

On the couch: therapists under analysis

FAY Weldon is an artist. Her polemic on therapism (Essay, January 11) raised my spirits. More than can be said for the banal and defensive letters you published in response (Letters, January 13, 14): they lower my spirits as do all responses to criticisms of this century's cult of the talking cures to man's ills.

It is absurd for therapists to claim more than the ability to listen properly and attempt to understand; also to guide and advise as to other means to help bear pain and relieve it. But such claims are made all the time. What to me is most shocking about practitioners of therapism is the fees they dare to charge, and justify. As a counsellor for 40 years, I long ago stopped mixing with so-called "professional therapists" and remain with those who do the work largely voluntarily — where there is also proper supervision and support. It is arrogance to make specious claims when we are trying to ease anguish in a society which demands the pursuit of happiness under all circumstances. To charge £30-£100 an hour for this dubious practice is immoral.
Jane Malleson.
38a Hamilton Terrace,
London NW8 9RG.

THEISTS and therapists seem to agree on so many things: both elevate ideas, gods, ids, souls, superegos etc, into facts, and both claim exclusive rights to truths hidden from mere laymen in the divine will or the Inner child or the airy realms of whatever tickles their fancy; while the self-serving indignation and spite that characterised the more panicky responses to Fay Weldon's essay smacked all too rancidly of fatwas and the blasphemy laws.
Alan Booth.
62 Kewferry Road,
Northwood,
Middx HA6 2PG.

A Country Diary

STRATHNAIRN: The badger tracks left the sett and went down under the moribund birch trees heading towards the house where apples put down for thrushes have been disappearing overnight. The tracks passed others on the way such as those of woodcock, pheasant, fox and roe deer and even I was surprised at just how many birds and mammals had been around under the cover of darkness. When the tracks passed under a fence they were joined by those of a pine marten and the two sets ran parallel to each other as they crossed the narrow road. However, the badger suddenly seemed to have a change of mind as the tracks swung sharply left and eventually disappeared under a dense blackthorn thicket. The badger could have been looking for birds that had gone into the bushes to roost and had succumbed but it was more likely that the bare ground would yield some earthworms. The pine marten tracks never deviated, however, as they went on towards the garden and through a hole in the garden fence that rabbits sometimes use. The tracks explored the outside of a hutch where the light Sussex cockerel and hens are kept and then wandered round the hutch with all the ducks inside. On most occasions when I can track pine martens in the garden they explore every single hutch. Whether this particular animal was distracted or just gave up is difficult to say but after the two hutches the tracks led off down the paddock. I followed them down and they met up with the tracks of a brown hare before swinging to one side and crossing the snow-covered ice on both the garden ponds. It then leapt on to the top of a fence-straining post and I could clearly see the tracks of all four paws as, perhaps, the animal used the vantage point to look around. Then it leapt down and went to the edge of the burn where it leapt across and I was amused to realise this point is the narrowest width of the whole burn and is exactly the same place that I jump across.
RAY COLLIER

صكنا من الاصل

Diary

Matthew Norman

WERE he not very much alive, my old friend Andrew Neil would be turning in his grave: the Sunday Times has decided to support Labour in the general election. After various meetings with leader writers and senior executives, editor John Witherow has finally plumped for Mr Tony Blair, and, doubtless anticipating that he will be backing the winner, he has instituted a search for some left-of-centre writers for the paper's Review section, which now contains the thoughts of such veteran sages of the right as Andrew Roberts. Although Mr Murdoch may yet decide that his tabloids (the minds of whose editors he prefers to make up for them) will stick with the Tories, this is clearly an important breakthrough for New Labour. So then, it's party time at Millbank . . . time to open the champagne (the decent stuff, that is; not the everyday champagne) and boogie on down.

THE Central Office of Information has issued its latest list of events, and the eye is drawn to number 272 . . . "National criminal intelligence service/paedophile police to visit Philippines". Clearly investigative journalism is called for. Could this be one for the Times's appropriately-named man in south-east Asia, Roger Boyes?

CONTROVERSY plagues the Wiltshire and Gloucestershire Standard after a front-page political exclusive. "Three whopping woolly willy-warmers," begins the report, "will be toasting the parts that other warmers cannot reach when the country's leading politicians hit the election trail, thanks to a Cirencester granny." Pearl Hammond, 73, is knitting the garments — one red, one yellow, one blue — for Messrs Major, Blair and Ashdown, and explains: "I was concerned about the lads getting their willies cold when they are out campaigning during the election." In one of two complaints received, however, Jeanie Heller argues that "such tasteless articles" trivialise the election process. Managing editor Peter Davidson admits to second thoughts, but will not say whether this week's paper will apologise. "We haven't had an editor since November," says Mr Davidson. "He left."

IN a fine example to us all about the wickedness of late payment, reformist think-tank The Constitution Unit reports prompt payment for the report, Human Rights Legislation, which it sent the Paymaster General's office. The report cost £10, while the cheque received yesterday is for the sum of £21,800. The question now is whether a cheque signed by David Willetts is still bankable. Ah well, he probably had a lot on his mind at the time, poor lamb.

AT the Daily Mail, an intriguing power struggle develops. That mannerly editor Paul Dacre, whose enchanting habit under stress is to draw blood from his back with his fingernails, has put two old chums in direct competition with each other, and egos seem sure to be ruffled. He has now hired Peter McKay to write a daily column under the byline Ephraim Hardcastle, while continuing to publish the efforts of my so-called rival Nigel Dempster. The pair go back a long way — once they were colleagues on Private Eye, as now they are fellow victims — while a little extra frisson comes from the fact that, during his brief stint editing Punch, Mr Mckay hired Nigel to write a spoof column . . . a mischievous appointment, some suspect, since this is a humorous column in which the columnist himself is the only joke. The way things are going, it may not be long before a troubled Dempster started writing to Ask Nigel at the much improved Punch himself.

AFTER months spent trekking 12,000 miles through India, Helen Jamieson has celebrated her safe return by tripping over the doorstep of her house in Bats, Kansas and breaking her ankle. As another Kansan woman once observed, there's no place like home.



Straw drinks in the last-chance saloon

Commentary

Hugo Young

JUDGES are not the greatest libertarians. The bench includes a number of men and women who have little natural interest in limiting the power of the state. The English establishment breeds a cosiness between its members which persuades them to grant the benefit of the doubt to most of each other's desires. Most judges, from the magistracy upwards, are unwilling to deny a policeman anything he wants in the way of a search warrant. From this it might be concluded that all the fuss about the Police Bill, which gives chief constables rather than judges the power to authorise surveillance, bugging and interference with property in pursuit of "serious" crime, is an empty academic game.

That is what the Labour Party leadership evidently thinks. We will know for certain on Monday. On that day comes the last chance to amend the bill in the House of Lords. In early December, the Labour peers were ordered by Jack Straw not to support a Liberal Democrat amendment requiring that a judge and not a policeman should be the permission-giver. The amendment now reappears. It puts Mr Straw and his leader to an absolutely critical test.

Why does the Labour Party matter? This is, after all, a Tory measure. Why does the House of Lords matter? The Commons, after all, come next. There is an inextricable link between the questions. The Lords, with its cross-bench element, is the only place where the argument from principle has a chance of prevailing over the discipline of the whips; and since the bill has not yet been to the Commons, the Lords will feel freer to amend it, if strongly persuaded, than would be the case if it had already passed the democratic House. But Labour is crucial. If Labour peers are ordered to sit on their hands, no amendment to any government bill will ever pass.

Since the December fiasco, Labour's state of mind has been exposed a little more. It is not an attractive sight. Mr Straw wrote a question-begging letter to the Guardian. It is now apparent that part of his mulishness is due to the fact that principled objections to the bill weren't raised until it got to the Lords.

He seems to regard the fact that they weren't seized on when the bill was published both as proof that they are artificial and as an item that justifies his own indifference. This is what "opposition" has come to: waiting for a loud objection and, when it doesn't come, collapsing gratefully into the arms of the minister.

There followed a performance on Newsnight, on January 7, by Mr Straw's subordinate, Alun Michael, over which it would be best to draw a veil. Serious crime, he said, didn't need to be defined. It was "as obvious as the elephant on your doorstep". In a display of arrogance that chilled the blood until it descended into gibbering insecurity, Mr Michael was not concerned to pay even lip-service to the libertarian argument. Meanwhile, it is worth noting that the right-wing press — The Daily Telegraph, the Daily Mail, The Times — have all woken up and written the kind of leaders they have never before addressed to Michael Howard.

The argument is fundamental. On one side sits the Home Office, seemingly Mr Straw, and certainly the Association of Chief Police Officers who wrote to the Guardian yesterday. They say the Police Bill only legitimises surveillance that has been conducted for decades, that this is vital work against big crime, that the power will never be abused, that judges would get in the way of action that often brooks no delay, and that a system of retrospective evaluation by a senior Surveillance Commissioner — the term is Howard's not Orwell's — provides all the reassurance the citizen could need. To them this is a technical matter, in which the state's convenience is being underwritten by statute for the greater good of society.

The other side says the issue is not technical but constitutional. The bill empowers a policeman to enter your home or office without any prior independent scrutiny, to do things that overturn a fundamental liberty of the citizen. The person who has expressed this with most undeflectable steeliness is a law lord, Lord Browne-Wilkinson. The Lord Chief Justice, no doubt after consulting the brethren, has come in on his side.

The argument this side

> The state, through its police, should not have such a power without some intervention from the judges

makes is not that serious crime doesn't need serious opposition, nor that all, or perhaps any, chief constables won't be trying to act in a reasonable manner. They say that a principle is at stake which transcends those propositions. The state, through its police agents, should not have such a power without some intervention, however thin and flaky, from the people who stand between state and citizen, the judges. They regard the Surveillance Commissioner as an empty sop: bearing in mind, perhaps, that his nearest analogue, the Telephone Tapping Commissioner, invariably makes an annual report finding that not one single abuse of the tapping powers has ever been committed — the only known example of perfection in the conduct of government.

It is not surprising that a government in power for 18 years has lost all capacity to see the constitutional issue. One of Mr Howard's most consistent traits as Home Secretary has been to play to the populist authoritarianism that has always blackened the soul of the Tory Party. That Labour should be as incorrigibly blind has something to do with government as well: either the party's anxiety to get there, or perhaps its belief that, with the seats in Whitehall already being warmed up, it needs to assume without delay the mantle of state power in all its enveloping severity, lest there be any intermission after Howard has gone.

Mr Straw is not completely insensitive to embarrassment. Confronted face to face by liberal people, he wriggles and squirms, before lecturing us on how far we are from Blackburn, where real life is lived and they return him as an MP. Some Labour peers are ashamed. Lord Callaghan, a former Home Secretary not noted for extravagant libertarianism when in post, has raised his voice. To meet the clamour, there is talk of Labour trying to exempt lawyers' offices from these depredations. But that is not the point. It evades the principle, which would cost little save Jack Straw's face to meet. What can be said of judges, as guardians of liberty, is what is said of democracy as a system of government. They are full of flaws — until you think about the alternatives.

A way to ease the pain of Hebron



Amos Oz

HEBRON goes under Palestinian rule: this is a right and necessary step, yet it is not an easy moment for the Jewish people. Were it not for the aggressive self-righteousness of some of the Jewish extremists in Hebron, the more moderate Israeli Jews would probably have been more inclined to express their anguish over parting from Hebron, which is, after all, King David's initial capital city, as well as the home town of an ancient Jewish community which had lived meekly and mildly for several centuries under Islamic rule. Without causing the slightest provocation to its Arab neighbours, this community was butchered and completely uprooted one day in 1929. This happened long before the creation of the State of Israel, long before the Palestinian refugee problem, long before Israeli occupation and Israeli settlements.

Nearly 20 years later, in 1948, Israel became a nation which the Arabs tried and failed to kill right at the outset. In the 1948 war several Palestinian towns and villages were uprooted, though most of the inhabitants were not massacred like the Jewish population of Hebron in 1929. Two decades later, during the Six-Day War in 1967, the Israeli army captured Hebron. The Israeli government then decided to restore the Jewish quarter of Hebron — a morally dubious decision, as it must have been based on the idea that the Jewish people have the right to resettle in the places from which they have been uprooted, whereas a site which the Palestinians have lost should be lost forever. Actually, the Israelis should have understood much earlier that both nations must make do with only a part of what each of them regards as its historical legacy. Both the Israelis and the Palestinians ought to give up part of their dream about restoring this or that glorious past: restoring completely one side's past is, by definition, erasing completely the other's. Such erasing means a fight to the death. Both sides would be better to make do with a partial, flawed fulfilment of their respective dreams: better mourn an unfulfilled dream, or an unobtained "glorious past", or even a lost home, than mourn more and more dead. Hebron, like the moon, is very near and visible to us — yet it is not part of our planet.

There have been two different urges in the making of modern Israel: the urge to create a safe home for the Jews, a free state, and the urge to reconstruct the "days of old". The impending peace with the Arabs demands that we Israelis make a clear choice: a home in peace and in freedom, or a reconstruction of an ancient temple — a pragmatic solution or biblical mysticism? A battle of legitimacy and recognition — or a battle over the holy places? The signing of the Hebron agreement by a Likud government signifies an Israeli willingness, at least up to a point, to take the pragmatic stance and renounce the "reconstructionist" urge, especially as this agreement is about to be endorsed by a 75 per cent majority in the Israeli Knesset. The entire opposition will vote in favour of it as well as most of the coalition.

Hebron is a wounded city, full of mistrust, hatred, fear and vindictiveness. Some of the hard-line Muslim fundamentalists reside in that city just a block or two from some of the most fanatical Jewish settlers. The shadows of the Jews massacred in Hebron by Arabs in 1929 mingle with the shadows of the Arab worshippers slain in 1995 by Dr Goldstein. Jihad and Hamas terrorism rubbing shoulders with Kahanist terrorism. Many in Hebron, Arabs and Jews alike, are fascinated by fantasies of nationalistic domination and submission, not by ideas of sharing and of coexistence. The future is not very promising, unless a concerted effort is made by Israelis and Palestinians from outside Hebron to tame the "Hebron Syndrome" of violent fanaticism.

THE Jewish settlers have coined the phrase, "Renew the Jewish community in Hebron". Maybe it's time for this slogan to be taken up by the Israeli doves. Now that the Palestinians have accepted, in accordance with the Oslo agreement, that there can be a Jewish section in Hebron — let us the doves renew it, let us the doves replace Rabbi Kahane's disciples and Rabbi Levinger's followers with a different type of Jewish settler. Let the Peace Now-oriented Israelis, the pro-peace Orthodox groups, the dovish religious movement volunteer to take shifts in inhabiting the Jewish quarter in Hebron and in conducting the Jewish prayers in the Tomb of the Patriarchs.

Let these new types of settler replace the oppressive ultra-extremists who are walking around town looking for trouble. Such an experiment may be *real* pioneering — the pioneering of peaceful coexistence. Such an experiment may work — provided, of course, that the Palestinians in Hebron are also willing to close the Book of Death and open the Book of Life.

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John Vidal urges Princess Diana to help us fill the moral vacuum in society, and below, our panel of experts offer some ethically-challenged dragons for her to slay

Agenda for St Diana



I DEFY anyone to go to a war zone and see children being blown up by anti-personnel mines and not want to shout about the immense cruelty and return wanting to throttle the politicians who have argued consistently that they are necessary evils.

So when the establishment argues that Princess Diana is "ill-advised", that "she should not meddle in politics", or that "things are not so straightforward", it is hard not to retch. Clearly, what hurts the Government is that when Diana speaks from the gut and calls for a worldwide ban on mines she is not just exposing the awfulness of the weapon, but also the amorality of the people who have spent years protecting the interests of the dealers and the corporations who cynically make them and sell them. The Government.

Ah, but things are not straightforward: you can't just address these things so shallowly, the politicians whinge. And they are dead right. It is impossible to change anything unless there is the political will and a real appetite for change — which there axiomatically cannot be be while politicians are so compromised by having their snouts in the trough and their heads in the clouds.

In the case of anti-personnel mines, the only reason that the Conservative Party favours their long phase-out at all is that it has been heavily lobbied by the arms-makers who see a whopping new market for expensive hi-tech self-detonating mines, which, they argue, will keep Britain's lead in weapon technology and be in the "national interest". It is the morality of the slaughterhouse.

But "I-only-want-to-help" Diana is entering uncharted waters, going way beyond her previous concern for Aids and leprosy sufferers. To be cynical, her Angolan trip can be seen as a way to reposition herself as a living saint. She has picked an easy-to-understand black-and-white issue that she knows will improve her moral standing.

And why should she not be political, her advisers will be asking today? The mine row has not hurt her; indeed, it has left her looking more spotless than Mother Theresa and as PC as Anita Roddick. Given the political moral vacuum, confusion in the churches, reluctance in business and the dreadful absence of international responsibility in Britain today, there is plenty of room for someone, however expensive their clothes, to star in the moral firmament.

Moreover Diana has a clear run in Royal circles, too. Prince Charles is consumed with his own affairs and is in danger of being reinvented by committee as an intensely boring "suit": a safe, value-free business ambassador of the corporate establishment. Don't expect too many pronouncements about difficult political and social issues like the environment from Highgrove these days. Diana could easily take on the pure green mantle.

Her way is clear in every direction. So what issue should she address next? A straw poll at the Guardian suggests that she should first bolster her image as a champion of morality, and move smartly to condemn child slavery in any one of a dozen countries. It can't fail to appeal everywhere in the old world, and will offend a few notable British commercial interests. When the political dust has settled, she could usefully expose British government shilly-shallying on sex tourism. With the right people embarrassed and the populace impressed, she could then undertake a world tour to address the scandal of overseas aid and the way it has been cut to ribbons yet is still being abused by corporations. A Schumacher Lecture broadside at the World Bank and the IMF for perpetuating third-world debt would earn her points, as would well-timed outrage at the tobacco companies, the baby-milk makers and some of the mining companies. Indeed, the quickest way to sainthood might be to say something outrageous and precipitate a massive show-trial libel case.

But it's early days. The Princess could throw caution to the immediate wind and form an alliance with the formidable Linda Chalker to campaign for a huge increase in third-world contraception availability and primary health care. If that's not controversial enough, she could join Amnesty International, International Pen and Victims of Torture. If she visited Nicaraguan coffee plantations to see how "fair trade" improved the life of *campesinos* for next to no cost, she would stack up the points in heaven.

But a proto-saint will not be able to help treading on Charles's old environment agenda. This she could hijack in a trice by visting Brazil, joining for a week the army of landless peasants and taking on Brazilian and Malaysian corporations for their rainforest destruction. She could swing back across the Far East, smash up a Hawk jet to prevent more genocide, and invest her fortune in ethical stock.

A well-orchestrated swim in the Euphrates or the Nile might graphically illustrate the coming reality of water wars. If she then declared herself a vegetarian, her way would be clear to champion animal-rights issues, and campaign against hunting, the new bio-technologies and the patenting of life. Street cred would improve if she got herself arrested at Newbury or Manchester Airport.

And if she found a taste for social equality, Diana could run riot in Britain, for a start condemning policies that make one-third of all children born here officially poor by EU definition. Her views on beggars, bicycles, servants would be courted. War heroes, social workers, pensioners, children and all the creatures without voice would queue to touch her garments. Were she to sell the Big Issue and campaign for free buses, the Government might fall.

But before embarking on such a moral crusade, though, she should know that "volunteering" is now no longer seen as purely altruistic. The greatest gains are thought to accrue to the volunteer, who gains deep self-knowledge. For example, someone who wears £10,000 dresses, yet who has experienced real poverty, may no longer be quite so committed to the material world.

What Diana should tackle next – a small symposium

Tessa Tennant Director, NPI Global Care Investments, and team

WHILE we applaud the Princess for her world alert of the landmine slaughter, we draw her attention back to the UK to a slaughter of not dissimilar proportions. Around 4,000 people are killed in road accidents each year and more than 300,000 are injured. Road accidents are the biggest cause of death among our young teenagers. So on yer feet Princess, ditch your cars, catch the bus and push all you can for safe, clean and efficient public transport.

Charles Secrett Executive director, Friends of the Earth

PRINCESS Diana's next moral campaign could focus on the UK and save tens of thousands of lives. A cold winter can result in 30,000-60,000 people dying from cold- or damp-related diseases, and yet this terrifying mortality rate could easily be reduced. A law which required government to insulate 500,000 homes a year for the next 15 years would generate at least 50,000 new jobs and save the Treasury £9,000 per year for every person who escaped the dole queue. Tens of thousands of "fuel poor" citizens would be spared the fatal consequences of cold winters, and the NHS would save hundreds of millions of pounds.

Terry Thomas Managing director, The Co-operative Bank

THE number of people being tortured for their political and religious beliefs is growing; and the UK plays a pivotal role in the financing and supply of equipment which sustains this evil. Stamping out this affront to human rights is difficult, because much of this apparatus is adapted from legitimate equipment. Yet British companies have been willing to procure electro-shock equipment which is well documented as being used to torture other human beings. If Princess Diana were to adopt this issue, it may not stop the trade; but the public would become far more aware of what a company in their neighbourhood may be supplying.

Stewart Wallis Deputy director, Oxfam UK & Ireland

CONSIDERING that Diana's fashion sense and clothes have caught the media's imagination over the years, she should take up the fight on behalf of the millions of garment workers worldwide who work in appalling conditions. Even Diana can't guarantee that the sweatshirt she's wearing hasn't been made in a sweatshop.

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Clinton Manson-Bahr

Disease in a warm climate

FOR MORE than 50 years Clinton Manson-Bahr, who has died aged 85, helped to ensure that tropical medicine remained in the forefront of medical research and that Britain's reputation as the country most concerned with the treatment, control and prevention of disease peculiar to warm climates remained paramount. This was especially true of infectious and parasitic disease transmitted by insects.

Clinton's Aberdonian grandfather, Sir Patrick Manson, was universally acknowledged as the father of tropical medicine. His studies in China in 1877 showed for the first time that mosquitoes could transmit human diseases and his enthusiasm led to the founding of the London School of Tropical Medicine in 1898, and the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1907. The first edition of *Manson's Tropical Diseases* was published in 1898. Under the editorship of Sir Philip Manson-Bahr, Clinton's father, and later Clinton himself, it remains the standard textbook in tropical medicine.

While his grandfather and father had worked in south-east Asia, Clinton preferred Africa, especially east Africa, where he was a consultant physician in Tanzania and later Kenya. There he pursued his hobby of shooting, not just for the pot — although guinea fowl was always on the menu in Clinton's home — but also in search of the animal reservoirs of human disease. His love of the wilderness had begun in Scotland and Ireland with his grandfather.

Clinton was a big man, with a booming voice, always smiling with boyish enthusiasm, self-deprecatory, too modest for a world where academic distinction was generally recognised as proportional to the number of personal scientific publications. All too often he declined joint authorship of publications of which he was a major contributor. He was content with the joy of living.

He particularly liked wild, northern Kenya from where, during the second world war as a Royal Army Medical Corps colonel, he helped to free Ethiopia from the Italians. Later, as senior specialist in Kenya and adviser to the East African Command, he was involved in the creation of the King George V Hospital which after independence became the Kenyatta Hospital. It has one of Africa's finest medical schools, which together with the hospital's research institutes became in the early 1960s one of the world's foremost centres for studies on tropical diseases.

> In east Africa he shot not just for the pot but also in search of the animal reservoirs of human disease

One of Clinton's great achievements was that he encouraged close relations between the hospital and medical officers in the field and, more particularly, with Nairobi's division of insect-born diseases, which was concerned with animal reservoirs of disease. The Indian and colonial services were disappearing with independence, and the Royal College of Physicians' external examiners knew little about tropical disease. They were more likely to ask students about coronary artery disease — which did not exist in the local population — than about malaria, which was universal. Clinton's counterpart in Uganda said his priority was "to slay the ghost of Patrick Manson." Perhaps tropical medicine had, earlier, been over-emphasised, but the subsequent result has been a failure to train tropical diseases specialists. Thus there has been an upsurge in parasitic and vector-born diseases, which were beginning to be controlled.

Clinton was involved in the discovery that animals like bush bucks were reservoirs of human sleeping sickness, that hyenas and jackals and wild hunting dogs were reservoirs of hydatid disease and that bush pigs and most of the wild carnivores were reservoirs of trichinosis, a disease widespread in Europe and America but which was then not thought to exist in Africa. For the first time a specialist physician was involved in the study and control of diseases in remote areas of Kenya.

His main interest was in leishmaniasis, a parasite causing the usually fatal disease, Kala Azar. He developed new methods of diagnosis and treatment, but never found a reservoir of the disease, although he found similar organisms in rodents that gave cross-protective immunity against the human disease; he was also the first to try to develop a leishmaniasis vaccine. (Later, working with parasitologists in Italy, he found that nonpathegenic forms of the same organism were widespread in the Mediterranean and became virulent and life-threatening to Aids sufferers.) During Clinton's time in Kenya he helped with studies on baboons as reservoirs of bilharzia and was closely involved in the discovery of a new disease, tanapox, clinically similar to a mild form of smallpox and found in monkeys.



Clinton Manson-Bahr . . . finding a link between bush bucks and human sleeping sickness

In 1962 Clinton left Kenya. His standing was recognised by the award of Brazil's Gaspar Vianna Medal. He became professor of clinical tropical medicine at Tulane University in New Orleans but, unhappy in the US, he returned to the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and his beloved Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene in 1968. He was still active as archivist and member of the council there until his death.

In 1955 he was awarded the society's highest award, the Manson Medal. Clinton's grandfather would have been delighted that his grandson had successfully maintained this tradition of excellence in helping to improve the health of people throughout the tropical world.

He married Joan, his constant helpmate, who survives him together with his daughter and son.

George Nelson

Philip Edmund Clinton Manson-Bahr, specialist in tropical medicine, born May 5, 1911; died December 31, 1996

Cao Yu

New voice of China's stage

CAO Yu (real name Wan Jiabao), who has died aged 86, was the most significant figure in the development of modern drama in China. The new theatre, which had begun to take shape in the early decades of the century, was part of the country's search for a modern cultural identity. By the mid-1920s, it had detached itself entirely from the traditional opera, which had dominated China's stage for several hundred years, and was calling itself "spoken drama" to emphasise that detachment.

However, despite aspirations to emulate Ibsen and other Western dramatists, it had yet to generate plays which could wholly exploit the potential of the modern realistic stage. It was the powerful and well-crafted work of the young student playwright, Cao Yu, in the 1930s that brought the "spoken drama" to film maturity.

Cao was educated at the prestigious Nankai School and University in Tianjin from 1922 to 1930; before completing a degree in English Literature at Qinghua University, Beijing. At Nankai and Qinghua, he was much involved in student drama, and it was in 1933, while he was still an undergraduate at Qinghua, that he wrote his first full-length play, *Thunderstorm*. The play has all the ingredients of tragedy on a grand scale, with adultery, incest, suicide and madness all present, but the plot is tightly constructed and it conveyed an intensity and challenge hitherto unseen on the Chinese stage.

The young playwright clearly owed much to western dramatists and he readily acknowledged in his preface to the play, that he had been "stealing threads from the master's house". Nonetheless, *Thunderstorm* was a resounding success when first performed in Shanghai and its rage against the values and morals of the establishment under the Guomindang government undoubtedly caught the mood of the times.

Cao's social critique continued in his next play, *Sunrise* (1936), but this time he left behind the hand of fate to describe a broader social scene of people living in a decadent hotel and brothel world. The atmosphere is melancholy and desultory as well as cruel and corrupt, with the central character, a high-class prostitute, committing suicide at the end of the play. There are echoes here of Chekhov, Gorky and Ostrovsky.

In his third play, *Wilderness*, in the following year, Cao began to explore expressionist techniques. The story was one of peasant revenge, and Cao modelled it on O'Neill's *The Emperor Jones*. A grotesque figure, fleeing from prison, seeks out the man who had originally framed him. Finding that this man is dead, he exacts vengeance on the son, before fleeing into a forest, where he has a sequence of hallucinatory experiences and ultimately meets his own death. The primitivism of the play proved less accessible to Chinese audiences than *Thunderstorm* or *Sunrise*, but the three dramas stand together as an impressive trilogy and as a major turning point in China's modern theatre.

His reputation was further consolidated by a number of wartime plays, of which the most significant was perhaps *Peking Man*, which many consider to be his best play. It describes the tensions and generational differences of a large family in decline. Members of the family are seen to be socially marginalised, in particular, the opium-smoking son of the head of the household. The *Peking Man* of the title, who appeared in the final act of the original version as a huge, primeval figure, but who was removed by Cao in the 1947 edition, serves as a symbol of freedom from the conventions that constrain the family.

When the Communist government came to power in 1949, Cao committed himself to the new cause, and he formally joined the Party in 1956. He became a senior figure in theatre and cultural circles and in a whole range of "friendship" associations. In the Cultural Revolution in 1966 he was denounced as a "reactionary academic authority", but he escaped more lightly than some other dramatists. He was reduced to carrying out menial duties at the People's Art Theatre in Beijing and was then sent to the countryside for a period of thought reform. However, by the mid-1970s he had regained his privileges and was active again in cultural work.

His creative output after 1949 was disappointingly thin, consisting of only three undistinguished plays. A mixture of busy administrative duties and ideological constraints would seem to have blunted his inspiration. He is, however, recognised to this day, at home and abroad, as the father of modern drama in China, thanks to his influential and inspiring writing for the theatre in the 1930s and 1940s.

Don Rimmington

Cao Yu, dramatist, born September 24, 1910; died December 13, 1996

George Young

Behind Ibrox's iron curtain

GEORGE Young, who has died aged 74, belonged to a football age in which tactics were rudimental, formations were strictly 2-3-5 and — the stereotype which he personified — centre-halves were hewn from stone.

The statistics of George Young's career were among the most impressive in Scottish football. He played for his country in 53 full and two war-time internationals, in an era when such fixtures were much less frequent. His only senior club was Rangers, with whom he won six league championships, four Scottish Cups and two League Cups. He was at the heart of a defence which became known as the Iron Curtain, through which little passed.

George Young was born in Grangemouth, the son of a railwayman. He was a Scottish schoolboy international and played for the junior club, Kirkintilloch Rob Roy, before being signed by Rangers in 1941. As a shipyard engineer he was in a reserved occupation during the war, and therefore avoided the career-break suffered by many of his contemporaries.

In spite of his great bulk, Young had an enviable reputation as a clean and fair player. He was never sent off in the course of a 16-year career at Ibrox and was booked only once — when, as captain, he protested too loudly in defence of one of his side. Until his dying day, he regarded that caution as a blight on his record.

Young played for most of his career at the centre of the defence, and latterly at right-back. Tom Finney jousted with him in both positions when Scotland met England. He said earlier this week: "I rated him very highly. He was a very big chap and an excellent tackler.

"You thought you had got away from him and then these tremendously long legs would come out and take the ball away from you. He was the sort of player who would never kick you. I considered him a friend."

After retiring as a player, Young tried his hand at managing Third Lanark, then one of Scotland's second-ranking senior clubs. His three-year stint, from 1959-62, showed considerable promise and Third Lanark, with a forward-line which many Scottish children of that generation can still recite, rose to third place in the old First Division.

With characteristic integrity, however, Young left the job when the club fell into the hands of a director who had an appalling business reputation. Young's judgment proved prescient since, shortly afterwards, Third Lanark became both bankrupt and defunct.

Young then became a hotelier, at Tillietudlum in Lanarkshire. This was not an unqualified success, largely due to his legendary generosity. He did a massive amount of work for charity. In particular, he raised very large sums for the ex-servicemen's Erskine Hospital Paraplegic Coach and Comforts Fund.

This responsibility had been handed on to him more than 40 years ago by his mentor, the Rangers manager Bill Struth, and Young sustained it right to the end. He would regularly accompany the outings of disabled ex-servicemen who held him in the highest esteem. An instantly recognisable figure throughout Scotland, he would quite literally give his last penny to someone in need.

He suffered a serious stroke five years ago and was himself confined to a wheelchair, without the power of speech but he maintained a lively interest in football and his beloved charities until shortly before his death. George Young, a much-loved giant of Scottish football, was predeceased by his wife and is survived by two daughters.



George Young . . . 53 Scottish caps and only one booking

Brian Wilson

George Young, footballer, born October 27, 1922; died January 10, 1997

Muriel Monkhouse

Red Cross star

MURIEL Monkhouse, who has died aged 86 was, through her patient and skilful work with the International Red Cross tracing network, responsible for reuniting many people divided by war, sometimes after separations of decades.

Muriel's work began in June 1940 when the Germans marched on Paris. Thousands of enquiries were reaching the French section of the Red Cross and the St John War Organisation's newly-created foreign relations department.

Through a friend, Muriel volunteered for the Red Cross and never left the organisation, working with the tracing department throughout the war and after 1945 recognising that the plight of hundreds of thousands of separated families did not end when hostilities ceased.

In 1949 Muriel took over the running of the British Red Cross tracing department. She realised that the work of tracing someone was a question of searching for a displaced person and supporting those who were looking for lost family members during the weeks or months that the search might take. Indeed, the work of tracing relatives forcibly separated during the second world war continues today.

Born in Hampstead, London, Muriel accompanied her family to South Africa as a 10-year-old. It was there that her other life-long interest — a passion for ballet — developed.

Back in London she took and even taught some classes at the Rambert School. Muriel gave to the work meticulous attention to detail, infinite patience and persistence. She had an intuitive sense of how important seemingly trivial information could be.

With the outbreak of each new world conflict, new letters appealing for Red Cross assistance would land on Muriel's desk. Her contribution worldwide to the goal of bringing together families in seemingly impossible circumstances is surely her permanent and best memorial.



Monkhouse . . . decorated

She was awarded an OBE in 1977 and, on her 1979 retirement, the Red Cross Badge of Honour for distinguished service and life membership of the society — which in 1994 launched the Muriel Monkhouse Award in her honour.

Sandra Singer

Muriel Monkhouse, Red Cross worker, born February 22, 1910; died December 4, 1996

Birthdays

Gavin Bryars, composer, 54; **Prof Tom Burns**, sociologist, 64; **Prof Roy Foster**, Irish historian, 48; **Prof Sir Peter Hirsch**, metallurgist, 72; **Christine Janes** (nee Truman), tennis player, 56; **Kate Moss**, supermodel, 23; **Prof Elaine Murphy**, psychogerlatrician, vice-chairman, Mental Health Act Commission, 50; **Richard Ormond**, director, National Maritime Museum, 58; **Nadine Peppard**, race relations consultant, 75; **Keith Shackleton**, artist and naturalist, 74; **Susan Sontag**, writer and stage director, 64; **Prof Sir Frederick Stewart**, geologist, 81; **Lord Thomson of Monifieth**, former chairman, IBA, 76; **Lady Marina Vaizey**, art critic, 59; **Prof Sir William Wade**, QC, constitutional lawyer, 79; **James Watson**, former chairman, National Freight Consortium, 62; **Spike Wells**, drummer, 51; **Michael White**, theatre and film producer, 61.

Death Notices

CHRISTIE, John Douglas died suddenly but peacefully on Friday 10th January 1997, at The National Hospital for Neurology and Neurosurgery. Cremation to take place on Friday 17th January at 4.30, at New Southgate Crematorium, Brunswick Park Road, London N11. Flowers to be sent to William Hodges to the Broadway Parade, Crouch End N8.

OUTHWAITE, Hilda. Peacefully on January 11 1997. Devoted wife of the late Harry Outhwaite (The Guardian and Manchester Evening News). Dearly loved mother of Susan and son-in-law Ben. Loving nana of Debbie, Julie and Helen and proud great nana of Robert and Alexander. Service at Crew Crematorium on 20 January at 3pm, no flowers, donations to Cancer Research. Enquiries to F.J. Tresidder & Son Tel: 01270 626804.

ROWE, Brian, of Bristol on 12 January 1997 aged 66, beloved husband of Rosalyn. Cremation at Canford Crematorium, Wimborne-on-Trym at 3pm on Monday 20 January. Family flowers only.

VINCE. On January 13 1997, Robert (Bob). Funeral service Glenorchy Church, Exeter Road, Exmouth, Monday January 20 at 11am.

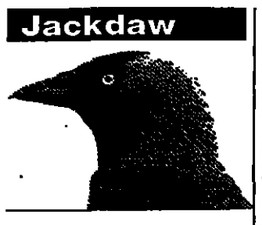
Births

BEARD, on December 20 to Polly and Tom, a daughter, Ella Florence.

EVANS, to David and Viveca, a daughter, Lucy, born in Edinburgh on 7 January 1997.

To place your announcement telephone 0171 713 4567 or fax 0171 713 4123 between 9am and 3pm Mon-Fri.

Jackdaw



Catfight

DEAR David,
I finally got my chance to score a free copy of your book yesterday. It happened at one of my book signings, just as I thought it would. See, when you are a best-selling author, they tend to give you extra attention and one of the many perks can be a gift from the bookstore. Well, as you know I could not expect to recieve a copy of your book from you, so I had to rely on some other method to obtain it. I could not bear to spend any money on one since I knew that $1.50 or so would go to you, and that would just not be acceptable to me. Trouble is, I have one that's not signed. Any chance you could meet me, say in some dark alley, and sign it for me? Just kidding, David. Don't get paranoid or anything. I don't need it signed. Sorry for all the bad press on your book, David. I guess some of it — nah probably a lot of it — is coming from the stink that's left over from what you did to me. But actually, it's really a crummy book.

You talk of (my) violations of "discretion" and respect for the "office" and for the FBI. David you can only dream of what it might be like to be an FBI agent working at the White House, or an Arkansas State Trooper, for that matter. In fact, you will never know what it's like to work at the White House — I'll make it my personal business to see to it that you are never accepted there, in the unlikely event that you ever want to go there. I guess that I could allow you to have a White House tour. Let me know if you want one, okay?

You are a liar, David. You know in your heart that you are, but your sins are probably much greater than I could ever imagine. When you launched your attack against me and my book, it didn't take five minutes for everyone left and right to see what you were up to. You were used by the mainstream press, the same press that now says your book is D.O.A.

Do you think that you will be able to come back to the conservatives when you find that the liberals won't have you? Maybe that's possible — in about 20 years or so. From what I hear, there is a deep, deep disgust and hatred for what you have tried to do to me.

Anyway, bad luck on your new book.

Exract from a letter sent by Gary Aldrich, author of Unlimited Access, to David Brock. The letter was printed in the New York Press. *In his book, Aldrich, a former FBI agent at the White House, wrote that President Clinton had been sneaked out of the White House under a blanket for a tryst at the Washington Marriott. It was later revealed that Aldrich's source for that allegation was Brock; Brock publicly disavowed the story, saying that Aldrich had reported as fact what Brock had mentioned to him as a rumour, and in his own book,* The Seduction of Hillary Rodham, *Brock dismissed the tale as "idle gossip."*

Strange days

HELEN Jamieson, 34, trekked more than 12,000 miles around India safely only to break her ankle tripping on her doorstep when she arrived home in Bats, Kansas.

A 99-year-old woman in Shengxian, Zhejiang province, eastern China, has sprouted horns. They started growing on Zhang Taofeng's head after she developed a lump in her forehead in 1992. One horn disappeared in 1995, but a replacement appeared.

Two men in Botsani, Romania, have been refused entry to the Orthodox priesthood because their penises "don't reach the minimum length set down in the rules."

A woman traffic warden was walking to work in Digbeth, Birmingham, when a man leapt in front of her, smeared her face with toothpaste from a piece of cardboard and fled.

From a letter in the Dundee Courier: "My family and I own a 250-acre farm in Crieff and are shooting tenants on another estate nearby."

Talayi George Sogowe, 65, sat up in his coffin and brought his funeral service to an abrupt end. Two hours into the service at his home in the Port Elizabeth black township of Zwide, he had heard enough. "I simply wanted to know what people would say about me when I am dead," he said. Sogowe staged the funeral with the help of his wife and family at a cost of over $1,000, more than twice the average monthly income of a Zwide family. He said that he would keep the coffin for a later date, when he had his real funeral.

A Chinese baby boy with two brains is doing well, but hardly sleeps because his brains work in rotation.

About 25 police forces in Michigan bought a computer program that is eating up case records. So far four years of data has disapeared — and so has the software maker.

News of the world, Fortean Times *style.*

Lost nation

"MY DAUGHTER, my daughter." These were the first words 18-year-old Gina Craig heard her father say after 12 years of being told that he was dead. She had just completed a 24-hour journey from a small town in Ohio, where she had lived as the adopted child of wealthy parents since she was six. "As I embraced my father I felt so much relief knowing that I had been right all along," says Gina of her emotional reunion in a Salvadorean village. "I knew in every part of my soul that my family was still alive." Jose Ayala Lainez had last seen his daughter in a field hospital run by left-wing Salvadorean rebels. She was then called Imelda. "Her legs were badly injured by a bomb," says Lainez. "My other daughter, Carolina, had been killed. We left Imelda overnight at the hospital. The next morning she was gone."



Marie-Claire . . . family ties

That was in 1983. Lainez now knows that the US-backed Salvadorean army, using vicious methods to suppress rebel opposition, had found the field hospital, killed the medical staff and driven the adults into the jungle. The children they took became valuable assets in a lucrative adoption trade. The customers were wealthy Americans who would often pay more than $10,000 for a healthy baby. In October 1984, within 10 months of Gina being kidnapped, an entire US family by the name of Craig was on a plane to the El Salvador capital, San Salvador, where they were scheduled to meet the head of an adoption agency. Tom and his wife Stephanie needed clearance from a Salvadorean court — the Tribunal For The Protection Of Children — and the US Embassy before they could take Gina home. Even now the Craigs refuse to discuss any payments that were made for their new daughter. A provisional guardianship was granted. When the Craigs asked after the parents they were told by the judge that they were presumed dead.

The US officials also said Gina's mother and father were deceased.

Marie-Claire *uncovers the baby trade in El Salvador.*

Jackdaw wants jewels. E-mail jackdaw@guardian.co.uk; fax 0171-713 4366; Jackdaw, The Guardian, 119 Farringdon Road, London EC1R 3ER.

Emily Sheffield

Hambros backs hotels buyout, page 12

Case of the vanishing croupiers, page 12

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FinanceGuardian

Tartan wins stripes for export sales

TARTAN was in the spotlight at last night's British Apparel Export Awards, held at the Royal Lancaster Hotel in London, as Lochcarron of Scotland was presented with the Gold Award for Outstanding Export Achievement.

Lochcarron, which claims to produce the world's largest collection of tartans, has 2,000 customers in the key export markets of Europe, the Far East and North and South America.

Its fabrics are sought after by such fashion gurus as Vivienne Westwood, one of whose dresses was modelled last night by model Amareet, pictured backstage before going down the catwalk.

The awards, created in 1986 by the British Knitting and Clothing Export Council, recognise the contribution of an industry with annual exports worth £3 billion.

Past winners include Marks & Spencer and Paul Smith.

PHOTOGRAPH: DAVID SILLITOE



Officials refuse to forecast trend as Job Seeker's Allowance clouds six-year low in unemployment

Doubt cast on jobless fall

Sarah Ryle

THE NUMBER of people unemployed plunged to a six-year low last month, but experts yesterday hinted that the recent figures were meaningless following the introduction of new benefit rules under the Job Seeker's Allowance.

Officials insisted they were unable to advise the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, on the outlook for unemployment as they published December's jobs figures just hours before Mr Clarke was due to meet Bank of England governor Eddie George to discuss inflation and interest rates.

The Office for National Statistics, which compiles the jobs data, was circumspect about December's 45,100 fall to 1,884,700 and called November's record fall in the claimant count of unemployment a "blip". It said it was unable to measure the impact of the Job Seeker's Allowance on December and November's figures accurately — although it estimated that the Job Seeker's Allowance factor flattered the cumulative fall by at least 17,000.

The latest fall brought the UK's unemployment rate down to 6.7 per cent last month from 6.9 per cent in November, sparking Tory celebration at the UK's position as the EU country with the best performance on jobs.

But the Statistical Office declined to give the usual trend estimate for the second month in a row. "Due to the uncertainties arising from the introduction of the Job Seeker's Allowance, the Office for National Statistics is unable to provide a useful trend estimate to anybody," officials said.

According to the office, none of the previous government benefit reforms has caused such uncertainty.

City analysts warned that the latest figures did not give the real picture. Before the allowance was introduced in late October, the average three-monthly decline had not risen above 26,200. Since then, the average over the three months to December was 62,000, out of line with previous Statistical Office trend estimates.

The Labour Force Survey — regarded as a more reliable guide to unemployment because it measures the number of people looking for work rather than those eligible for benefit — showed a more modest decline. Joblessness for the three months to November showed unemployment was 2,230,000, a fall of 32,000 on the previous quarter and of 166,000 on the previous year. The unemployment rate was 7.9 per cent compared to 6.7 per cent on the official claimant count.

Although the Office for National Statistics reported a 72,000 decline in the number of economically inactive people of working age, officials said that the trend since 1992 had been upwards and warned against placing too much emphasis on one quarter's figures.

Simon Briscoe, UK economist at Nikko Bank, warned that the latest jobs figures said nothing about the true state of the economy. He said: "The massive fall in unemployment in November now seems to be an erratic and no one in their right mind could credibly use that as an excuse for higher interest rates."

But other commentators warned that in spite of uncertainty over the recent job figures, there was evidence that the labour market had tightened, spelling danger for wage inflation this year.

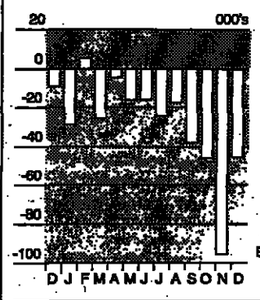
David Walton, economist at Goldman Sachs, said: "The ratio of vacancies to short-term unemployment is now at a level not seen even at the height of the 1980s boom on both the claimant and LFS measures."

Earnings growth has held reasonably steady, at 4 per cent in November for the fifth consecutive month, providing fresh signs that the fall in claimant unemployment overstates the true state of the labour market. On the other side of the coin, the workforce in employment rose by 200,000 in the three months to September to 26,076,000.

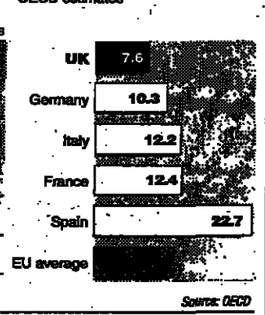
There was fresh evidence that manufacturing is still weak as employment in that sector fell by a seasonally adjusted 11,000 in the month to November and was 13,000 lower than a year ago.

Unemployment around Europe

UK claimants, seasonally adjusted. Change since previous month



Percentage of workforce unemployed, OECD estimates



Source: OECD

Shorter dole queues keep Britain ahead of Europe

Charlotte Denny

BRITAIN'S declining unemployment rate is in stark contrast to the rise in joblessness across the rest of Europe, according to figures from international organisations.

While Germany, France and Italy now have double-figure unemployment rates, the UK rate has fallen steadily from its peak in the winter of 1992-93 and is the lowest of any of the large European Union nations.

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, Britain had 7.6 per cent of the workforce unemployed last year, almost three percentage points below the EU average of 11.4 per cent.

Germany, where joblessness is at its worst since the 1930s, has an OECD-measured unemployment rate of 10.3 per cent and France has seen its rate double to 12.4 per cent over the past 16 years. Labour market economist Peter Robinson attributed the fall in unemployment to the boost to the economy of lower interest rates since Britain left the exchange rate mechanism in autumn 1992.

Mr Robinson said that the UK had a less regulated labour market throughout the 1980s when unemployment was generally higher than in the other big European economies.

However, Italy, which left the ERM at the same time as Britain in 1992, has seen no equivalent improvement in its employment record, with its jobless rate rising from 8.8 per cent to 12.2 per cent.

Property lenders told to limit risk

Mark Milner
Deputy Financial Editor

A SENIOR Bank of England official yesterday warned commercial property lenders against being pushed into taking excessive risks by competitive pressures.

In an otherwise upbeat speech, one of the Bank's executive directors, Pen Kent, cautioned banks against repeating past mistakes by being less rigorous in sticking to lending guidelines

"We are in favour of healthy competition among lenders but history suggests that the seeds of tomorrow's losses are sown when lenders relax the basics."

In particular he warned: "We hear that some lenders are seeking to pressurise valuers into higher valuations. This is not a healthy practice and we hope both lenders and the valuing profession will be strong enough to resist."

Mr Kent noted that though some of the factors which contributed to the last property market collapse at the end of the 1980s could be detected in the current market, there were differences too. "Perhaps the most notable [of the differences] are the comparatively limited scale of speculative development and more realistic expectations."

Some of the risks involved in commercial property were now better understood, he said, and he pointed to important changes which would take place within the market.

Mr Kent noted four factors pushing change. Low inflation, he said, would promote more rational decision-making. The Private Finance Initiative would revolutionise property use. Technology might be making many buildings obsolete, but in the future would "transform the usability and efficiency of property as an asset class".

Finally he said the market needed to be more liquid, — a development helped by greater use of securitisation. "We need a mature, liquid, cash market in property with a healthy derivative market to permit successful management of risk."

Notebook

Flexibility can bend both ways



Edited by Mark Milner

ANYONE who has placed a £19 billion bet is entitled to be nervous. Thus the stock market's early twitch yesterday on the back of better than expected unemployment figures. Investor confidence that the Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, would not sanction an increase in interest rates when he met the governor of the Bank of England yesterday afternoon had helped the FTSE 100 share to a 111 point rise on Monday and Tuesday. Not surprising then that the 45,000 fall in the jobless total, well above expectations, produced something of a gulp from the market.

There was no gulp from John Major, however. The Prime Minister was quick to exploit the figures, pointing out that Britain had produced more jobs in the last four years than the other main countries in Europe put together. Despite the impact on the statistics of the Job Seeker's Allowance, Labour jibes that the numbers were "figures of fantasy" still had a rather hollow ring.

But just pause for a minute. The central thrust of the Conservative strategy on jobs has been to make Britain's labour market more flexible. To that end trade union power has been reduced, job protection rights eroded, calls for a minimum wage resisted.

Some economists would argue that the new-look labour market structure means the jobless total in Britain could fall to about four per cent before breaching the non-inflation accelerating rate of unemployment; that is the rate below which labour market shortages start to push up wages and prices.

Those of a less optimistic turn of mind might care to reflect that flexibility is a twin track approach — it makes workers cheaper to hire and easier to fire. That encourages employers to recruit when the economy is growing but it means they will be able to shed workers quickly in a downturn.

Government boasts about Britain's sterling performance on the jobs front in comparison with other European countries will only be vindicated if that performance is sustained across the economic cycle. Or are we meant to be grateful, not only for part time jobs, but also for only having a job for part of the time?

Big wheels skid

TALKING of job insecurity there is speculation that Ford will today announce it is axing more than 1,000 jobs at Halewood on Merseyside.

Ford suddenly appears to be in rather a panic over Halewood, a plant which has lived in a state of perpetual insecurity since the 1970s.

Three months ago, the company had a clear plan — worked out with local agencies — to boost Halewood's efficiency by out-sourcing work to a "village" of suppliers who would be induced to set up shop around the plant. Unions agreed the plan.

Now with third quarter losses in Europe ballooning to £279.2 million, management at Ford's US headquarters in Dearborn is scrambling to cut capacity. Inevitably the spotlight has fallen on Halewood, one of three European plants producing the Escort.

Why the big wheels in Detroit have been suddenly alarmed by a crisis of overcapacity which they might well have seen coming, raises important questions about Ford management. Could they, for example, have been concentrating so hard on the Ford 2000 globalisation programme that they have taken their eye off what is happening today in key local markets?

But if a new strategy of capacity slashing has been conceived in haste, the tactics have a familiar ring.

Only recently there was feverish speculation in the German press that Ford was to close its Cologne plant which makes the low profit margin Fiesta and the ageing Scorpio. When the company met unions it won important concessions on flexibility. Now similar speculation swirls round Halewood.

Yet Ford's internal analysis of labour costs in Europe shows that, including social costs, the group needs to pay $54 an hour to employ a German car worker, $28 an hour for his Spanish equivalent in Spain and $27 an hour in Britain.

That is hardly an the most convincing argument for putting Halewood in the firing line.

Secret entente

FROSTY relations between the French and German monetary authorities are turning ever more glacial. First there was the row at the European Union summit in Dublin in December over a stability pact to keep single currency countries on the fiscal straight and narrow. Now there is a fresh spat over the French decision to invoke what is claimed to be an unwritten and previously unheard of deal with the Germans.

Under its terms France would support the siting of the European Central Bank in Frankfurt if their man could be its first boss. Jacques Delors is one name in the frame. But what of Holland's Wim Duisenberg, who will take over at the ECB's forerunner, the European Monetary Institute, later this year? Most expected Mr Duisenberg to slip seamlessly from the EMI to the ECB. Indeed he may still so. In the meantime he, and others from Europe's central banks, should be asking some sharp questions about secret diplomacy.

Cigarette firm tries to woo women with rhythm method

Mark Tran in New York

PHILIP Morris, Lady Thatcher's favourite cigarette firm, wants to rock and roll as part of a new act to boost flagging sales of its Virginia Slims to women.

The world's largest tobacco company plans to start its own record label, Woman Thing Music, based on the new Virginia Slims ad. It's a Woman Thing (being countered by a Virginia Slims: It's a Cancer Thing ad from anti-smokers).

Philip Morris's venture into music comes as the Clinton administration is contemplating a crackdown on cigarette advertising aimed at teenagers. Critics say the latest venture is clearly designed to lure the young by conveying the idea that smoking is hip.

The label will feature new women artists singing rock, country and rhythm and blues. The compact discs will not be available in record stores but will be given away free with the purchase of two packets of Virginia Slims. Philip Morris is grooming for stardom an obscure soap-opera actress, Martha Byrne, who happens to be a non-smoker. The company hired a top producer and some of the best session musicians money can buy to work with Ms Byrne, who is scheduled to go on tour in spring.

To stoke up interest Philip Morris will stage auditions at each venue of Ms Byrne's tour to pick a local woman rocker or woman-led band as the opening act.

The company has resorted to increasingly roundabout ways to sell cigarettes. It has created clothing, a magazine and even a cross-country train trip aboard the Marlboro Unlimited to get its message across. Virginia Slims used to sponsor women's professional tennis until public pressure on the players to kick the habit.

Philip Morris found Ms Byrne after nationwide auditions. "I don't feel I am being used. We are all individuals and we all have personal choices," she said.

Christmas cheer for Woolworths

Roger Cowe

KEEN prices at Woolworths helped the store chain achieve strong Christmas sales, but trading reports from a trio of other retailers yesterday added to the picture of patchy spending.

Kingfisher reported buoyant sales at Comet as well as Woolworths while Allder's also said sales had been good before and after Christmas. But Body Shop found the going tough and Laura Ashley did well in the UK but struggled in the US and continental Europe.

The overall picture is of restrained spending, with housing-related sales doing well but a mixed performance elsewhere even within the same sector.

Retail analyst John Richards, of NatWest Securities, said: "We are seeing a pattern of spending where a sufficient number of consumers decided they would wait for the bargains in the January sale."

Kingfisher said sales at Woolworths in the nine weeks to January 4 were 8 per cent higher than the same period a year earlier.

Another Kingfisher subsidiary, Comet, reported even stronger sales, although the 14 per cent rise compared with a disappointing performance last year. Like Dixons, Comet said electrical goods had sold well over Christmas.

All the group's formats, including B&Q and Superdrug and the French electrical chain Darty, produced sales growth slightly ahead of the figures for the financial year so far.

Body Shop acknowledged that UK sales were disappointing, contributing to a 2 per cent drop in comparable sales for the 10 weeks to January 4. The figures were confused by exchange rate movements and disposals. Chairman Gordon Roddick admitted the sales picture was mixed. He said: "In Europe the sales performance was varied with the UK coming in below expectations, and the generally positive trends in northern Europe being offset by a weaker sales pattern in southern Europe."

Laura Ashley saw comparable sales at its stores in Britain rise 10 percent in the six weeks to January 4. But the overall performance was held back by an 8 per cent drop in same-store sales in continental Europe and a rise of only 1 per cent in North America.

Stores group Allders saw comparable sales rise 12 percent in the first 15 weeks of its financial year. Sales in the latest three weeks, the beginning of the store's winter sale, were up 16 per cent.

CAA to require personal indemnities from tour operators

THE Civil Aviation Authority yesterday launched a package of measures intended to tighten regulation of licensed sellers of flights and holiday packages after a series of company failures during 1996.

The main aim of the regulation package is better to prevent companies selling more flights than they are licensed to sell, which the CAA said has become a problem among holders of the Air Travel Organisers Licence (Atol).

From April, the CAA will require personal indemnities from Atol company directors, limits on the number of seat sales to be set into licences and reporting by firms of bookings and seat sales.

"In addition to the package of stricter controls, the CAA (will) explore with government whether a new back-up fund might be set up," the authority said.

To get an Atol licence, a tour operator must lodge a bond by way of a guarantee from a bank or insurance company. During the past financial year, the CAA made refunds to 21,000 people who would otherwise have lost their money and enabled 14,000 to complete holidays after operators failed.

— Reuter

Venezuela loses millions as liners seek safer havens

Nicholas Bannister

CRUISE ship passengers are accustomed to being accosted by locals for money. But at La Guaira, Venezuela's main port, the locals have overstepped the mark.

Two big cruise lines, Holland America and Carnival, have cancelled regular calls at the port because their passengers were getting robbed or assaulted too often. As a result the country stands to lose millions of dollars in tourist revenue.

The two lines account for 142,000 of the 700,000 tourists who visit Venezuela every year, and their passengers are estimated to spend at least $14.2 million (£8.5 million) while ashore.

Now they plan to take their business to Puerto Rico or to Aruba and Bonaire in the Lesser Antilles where they reckon thir passengers will get less hassle.

Marta Romero, a spokeswoman for Carnival, said customers frequently reported crimes, including assaults and robberies. She claimed the police did not provide adequate protection. "We have to make passengers' security our priority."

The shipping lines' boycott of La Guaira, the main port for the Venezeluan capital Caracas, will be a blow to the authorities who have been trying to rebuild the tourist trade following two violent coup attempts in 1992.

But the problem will not be solved just by stepping up the police presence. The two shipping lines are complaining about the inefficiency of the port authorities and say they are paying millions of dollars for port costs and docking services which need to be improved.

TOURIST RATES — BANK SELLS

Australia 2.09	France 8.73	Italy 2,547	Singapore 2.30
Austria 18.25	Germany 2.5950	Malta 0.5950	South Africa 7.60
Belgium 53.45	Greece 407.00	Netherlands 2.9175	Spain 216.75
Canada 2.2075	Hong Kong 12.63	New Zealand 2.32	Sweden 11.49
Cyprus 0.7760	India 59.83	Norway 10.44	Switzerland 2.23
Denmark 9.92	Ireland 0.9875	Portugal 289.70	Turkey 180,760
Finland 7.89	Israel 5.44	Saudi Arabia 8.23	USA 1.6360

Supplied by NatWest Bank (excluding Indian rupee and Israeli shekel).

Hambro bid for Queens Moat hotels

Dominic Walsh

HAMBRO European Ventures, the principal venture capital arm of Hambros Bank, is preparing to back a £90 million-plus buyout of 25 hotels put up for sale last April by Queens Moat Houses.

The deal, which is expected to be tied up next month, is thought to have been delayed by the sudden death two weeks ago of John Swarbrick, a former Thistle Hotels executive lined up as part of the management team.

The Hambro bid is understood to have prevailed over a similar offer from Adams Hotels, a small Glasgow-based company which had secured funding from the Royal Bank of Scotland.

Queens Moat, which is selling the hotels to reduce its £1 billion debt, described talk of a deal as "premature", while Hambro declined to comment.

However, one leisure analyst said last night: "If, as we expect, this deal goes through it will be a drop in the ocean of Queens Moat's huge debts. It is also somewhat below the predicted £100 million, but it's a step in the right direction."

The package, whose disposal is being handled by Deutsche Morgan Grenfell and Christie & Co, comprises 19 provincial County Hotels and a further six under the Moat House banner. They include the Burnham Beeches Hotel in Buckinghamshire, the England football team's HQ during Euro 96.

Hambros, whose private equity division manages investments worth more than £500 million, has two investments in the hospitality industry. Lyric Hotels, a provincial operator, and London-based Franklin Hotels are both candidates for a flotation or trade sale by the end of this year.

News of the transactions comes after a frenzied 12 months of activity in the hotel sector triggered by Granada's £3.9 billion takeover of Forte last January.

A host of new issues followed, including Thistle, Jarvis and Millennium & Copthorne. In November Stakis launched a rights issue to fund the acquisition of Lonrho's Metropole chain for £327 million.

Tomorrow, Lonrho is expected to accompany its full-year results with encouraging noises on the long-mooted disposal of its Princess chain, worth another £300 million-plus. The favoured bidder is Prince Alwaleed, the Saudi Arabian billionaire.



Stanley Leisure chief executive Mike Kershaw, left, and managing director John Whittaker display their winning hands PHOTOGRAPH: DON McPHEE

Honest croupiers cashing in their chips

BRITAIN is suffering from an acute shortage of skills in a new and unexpected quarter: the country's casinos are running out of croupiers, thanks to aggressive recruitment from cruise operators, exotic locations like South Africa's Sun City, and even Eastern Europe, *writes Ian King*.

The average croupier tends to be single, in his or her late teens or early 20s, and earning around £8,000 a year, fair game for foreign casino operators who see British croupiers as the world's best — and most honest.

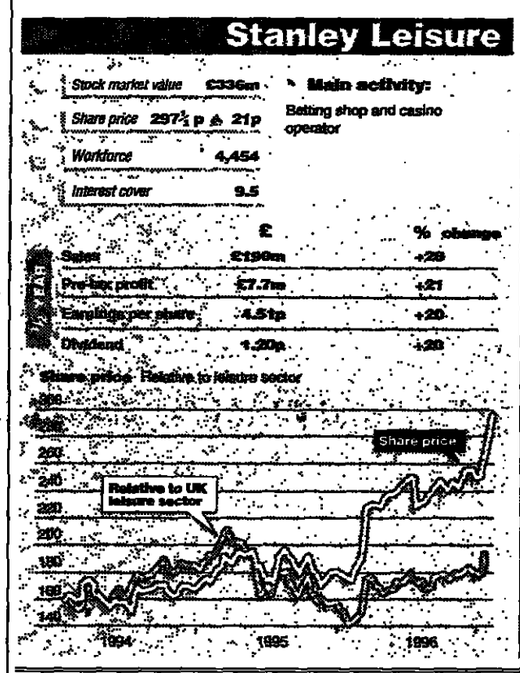
A top croupier — an inspector — is said to take 18 months to train properly.

According to Stanley Leisure, which runs one in five of Britain's casinos, the scarcity problem has been exacerbated by Britain's gamblers getting sharper at their game.

Because of this, the industry is now looking to employ older, married croupiers, who are less free to quit at short notice, and who, according to Stanley's chairman, Leonard Steinberg, are "cooler" in a crisis, and better at spotting cheats.

Another goldmine for the 49ers

Stanley Leisure



OUTLOOK/ Ian King finds one bookie undaunted by Dettori Day and the ravages of the National Lottery

FRANKIE Dettori, the man who rode seven winners at Ascot in September, could have been forgiven for feeling his ears burning yesterday.

According to Leonard Steinberg, chairman of Stanley Leisure and *éminence grise* of the betting industry, Mr Dettori's achievement as the first jockey to win an entire seven-race card since 1958 — at accumulator odds of 25,000/1 — cost bookies £30 million.

Of that, Stanley weighed in with a loss of over £2 million, with the group's latest acquisition, Sunderland-based bookie Gus Carter, taking a £235,000 hit on one bet alone.

But despite "Dettori Day", as it has become known in the trade, Stanley is still doing pretty well, announcing first-half pre-tax profits of £7.4 million yesterday, a rise of 21 per cent.

The lion's share came, as ever, from the racing — betting shop — division, which was helped by the Carter acquisition and the recent cut in betting duty, although Mr Steinberg failed to break out the exact worth of the latter.

At the same time, Stanley's casino arm managed a healthy 12 per cent increase in profits, despite the fact that British punters, according to Mr Steinberg, are better gamblers than they used to be.

Stanley's experiences encapsulate the changing fortunes of the betting industry, which this time last year was complaining about the effects of the National Lottery, but which has suddenly found that life is not quite so bad.

For instance, although the weather this winter has put paid to more race meetings than last year, there has been just one racing day wiped out, thanks to all-weather courses and betting on South African meetings.

At the same time, there has been an upswing in non-racing betting, mainly through football — chiefly events like Euro 96 — and the Irish National Lottery, which is attracting women into betting shops, and which has helped counter the painful effects of Camelot's weekly draw.

For the future, the controversial 49's game — created in the face of opposition from Camelot in a rare team effort by the industry to combat the National Lottery — has made a storming start in its first four weeks, although Mr Steinberg was uncharacteristically coy yesterday about how well it was doing.

According to City analysts, this is because bookies do not want the potential popularity of 49's to attract attention, although its success could diminish when Camelot's mid-week lottery is introduced next month.

Meanwhile, Stanley's casinos arm has — like other operators — enjoyed an uplift in turnover, mainly due to regulatory changes allowing more slot machines in each club.

Other likely changes include a relaxation of the 48 hours rule — to require would-be gamblers to become members of casinos just 24 hours in advance — while the government has given its consent to some 20 more casinos nationwide.

Stanley is looking to open casinos in around eight of the new locations, while it is also exploring opening clubs in Bermuda, Italy, Northern Ireland and Jersey.

As if to emphasise the blossoming of the British gaming industry following the lottery's introduction, the Government has said it will drop regulations preventing football pools operators from running competitions on mid-week matches, while rules covering rollovers on pools contests will also be relaxed.

Although not a pools operator, Stanley is well placed to benefit from future gaming deregulation, and its shares would therefore be worth backing.

Unfortunately, most of the City's professionals have got in there first, and there is little value left for the small-time punter.

News in brief

Fiat executives on trial in Turin

The chairman of Fiat, Cesare Romiti, went on trial yesterday on charges of accounting fraud and making illegal payments to politicians and overseas managers. The hearing was formally opened after 150 workers at Fiat lodged separate requests to present themselves as civil plaintiffs at the trial.

The trial in Turin, where Fiat has its headquarters, was later adjourned until today to give defence lawyers time to decide whether they could legally challenge the requests. Also on trial is Fiat's finance director, Francesco Paolo Mattioli. The two face similar charges, although Romiti is also being tried on a count of tax fraud. Romiti took over the running of Italy's largest industrial group last March when Gianni Agnelli stood down after more than 30 years. The two are accused of diverting more than 30 billion lire (£11.8 million) into overseas accounts from the 1980s. Prosecutors allege the funds were used to make payments to political parties, politicians and Fiat managers abroad. The hearing is being conducted behind closed doors under a fast-track, plea-bargaining procedure. — *Reuter*

Central Europe export drive

The Government has launched a campaign to double exports to central Europe to £4 billion and to significantly increase the number of British investment projects. The Trade Secretary, Ian Lang, said the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland, the Slovak Republic and Slovenia could become the European Tiger, rivalling the Far East as a leading export market.

The Department of Trade and Industry is joining with the Foreign Office to launch the 18-month campaign, which will include trade missions and fairs, and roadshows and seminars in the UK. — *PA*

Norwich Union names chief

Norwich Union, the mutual insurer planning to float later this year, has said that Richard Harvey, the current finance director, will take over as chief executive at the end of 1997. Mr Harvey will succeed Allan Bridgewater who is due to retire.

Insider dealing denied

The Go Ahead Group, the bus operator which is moving into the privatised railway industry, yesterday rejected allegations made in the Commons by Labour MP Dale Campbell Savours of possible insider dealing in the company's shares, which have risen sharply in recent months. Mr Campbell Savours alleged in an early day motion that directors were able to leak price-sensitive information for use in share speculation. His allegations concern Go Ahead's bid with a management buy-out team for the franchise to run Regional Railways North East. The group's managing director, Martin Ballinger, dismissed the allegations as "absolute tosh", adding: "Nobody made any money as no one sold (shares)." — *Simon Beavis*

Trust in luck, and your insurance

Pauline Springett

THE recent spate of daring rescues of yachtsmen, explorers of icy wastes and failed balloonists has highlighted the development of a little-known form of insurance — search and rescue.

Reg Brown, an underwriter at Lloyd's of London with the Octavian agency, said: "There is no such thing as standard search and rescue insurance. You have to negotiate your own package of insurance for your own needs. Often it is an extension to an existing policy."

Richard Branson's Virgin Group insured, ahead of the his ill-fated global balloon attempt. David Kinloch, Virgin's risk manager, said a £1 million policy was taken out, covering the search and rescue of the balloon and its contents, "human and otherwise".

Virgin is in the first stages of claiming on the policy, probably for around £150,000.

The cover cost Virgin "in the low tens of thousands of pounds" — less than such policies normally cost as it was negotiated as an extension to Virgin's group travel insurance policy, rather than as a special stand-alone deal.

In the first instance, Virgin underwrote the insurance itself. It then reinsured much of the risk through a raft of UK-based international insurance companies, most of them American.

Mr Kinloch said Virgin had bought the insurance so it could help pay for any rescue bill incurred by a foreign government.

Mr Branson, may well wish to renew the attempt over the same airspace. "If you want to stay friends with people, you have to be prepared to foot the bill," Mr Kinloch said.

That may be so, but governments do not normally charge for rescues, particularly high profile ones, as illustrated by the way the Australian government is apparently footing the vast bill for last week's rescue of British yatchsman Tony Bullimore.

However, sometimes specialist insurance cover is essential. Antarctic explorer Sir Ranulph Fiennes told BBC's Newsnight last week that rescue insurance was compulsory for his expeditions because the rescue plane service for the Antarctic insists on it.

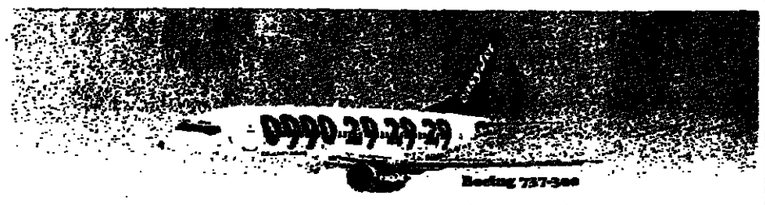
Mark Hewlett, managing director of specialist Lloyd's analysts Syndicate Underwriting Research, said many travel policies will cover the cost of being plucked to safety, especially if illness has caused the expedition to go wrong.

"If you were really in the middle of nowhere, insurance would probably be of little use because you would be out of reach of a helicopter," he said.

In those circumstances, he said, stricken seagoers tended to rely on the goodwill of passing ships.



Swiss round-the-world balloon hopes are deflated



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Underside

Dan Atkinson

PLEASE respect both national anthems as we kick off Soccerex '97 — "the business convention for football worldwide" — at the end of April. Clock the big names: Jack Charlton, Taylors Graham and Gordon, and Fifa gensec Sepp Blatter. Topics include (oo-er), the press, "soccer's number-one problem"? The publicity continues: "Soccerex '97 ... made its debut at Wembley last year." No doubt during that great tournament, Euro '97.

DON'T mention Euro-anything to the stripey-blazers at Liffe, the amusement arcade on Cannon Bridge — they're the latest casualties in the struggle for mastery with the Frankfurters.

To allow earlier trading of Euromark futures 'n' options contracts — a key combat zone with the field-grey blazers — the boisterous bandit-addicts will now have to struggle to be at their pit half an hour earlier. Worse, they'll be clocking off no earlier. If this doesn't knock the party spirits out of the blazers, nothing will.



BUT THEY still like a laugh at the Serious Fraud Office, in moments not occupied by Jegs (the Job Evaluation and Grading System), job-satisfaction meetings ... oh, and chasing the odd crook. The fraud-busters won't be able to resist a smile when scanning the paperback edition of Brian Widlake's *opus*, Serious Fraud Office (Warner; 1996). In hardback (Little Brown; 1995), the author anticipated the Davie report: "One would not be surprised if it recommended ... the merger of the SFO and the Fraud Investigation Group [of the Crown Prosecution Service]." Davie did not. The paperback concludes: "The last thing that should happen to the SFO is to be absorbed into the Crown Prosecution Service." Quite so.

OVER IN Earl's Court, Britain's talent for what management gurus call "lack of follow-through" was on display. Tony Bullimore, hoicked from Davy Jones' Locker by the Royal Australian Navy, survived largely thanks to his £700 Musto survival suit. He was rescued as the London Boat Show was in full swing. And which leading UK marine clothing company did not have a stand? Roger. Was family-owned Musto so vulgar as to take advantage. No sir, but other stands proudly displayed television clips of the back-from-the-deep yachtsman.

A FINAL Euritem: Ireland's EU presidency last year was particularly interesting for Dennis O'Driscoll, by day a Dublin customs official, by night a poet of international repute. Assigned to the task force dealing with drugs, excise duties, smuggling, etc, he raced to finish his latest collection — Quality Times (Anvil) — before the circus hit town, but fears his experience may have turned his English into Euro-English: children's poetry only from now on.

Even so, the poetry/presidency divide was not as wide as he had imagined. He told us "so much of it comes down to language ... [to] concentration on single words which you thought was the monopoly of poetry". Indeed, the EU is an "experiment in linguistic synthesis". Poem ideas garnered during the presidency, he said, would be "thawed out like frozen embryos to see if they can be fertilised". His English still sounds OK to us.



rampant

"terrifying set pieces... a book to make you boil the kettle and break out the DDT"

Time Out

Cricket

Stewart masters a new sensation

David Hopps in Palmerston North

THE most distinctive spectator at Fitzherbert Park yesterday was an 88-year-old Roman Catholic priest who is travelling the length of New Zealand, bearing a large white cross, to proclaim to all who will listen that the world will end by the year 2000.

England's performances in Zimbabwe this winter having already been perceived as the end of the world, they had every reason to suggest that such a warning was already several weeks out of date.

In New Zealand, England's sensations have been more to do with new beginnings, and the first three days against an NZC Selection XI containing eight players with Test experience have served only to encourage the mood.

By rattling up 427 for eight declared they took a first-innings lead of 289 and then cheaply dismissed Craig Spearman, a strong candidate for a Test opener's place, caught by Atherton at gully off the bowling of Cork, as the Selection XI reduced the arrears by 25 before beginning the final day still needing 264 to avoid an innings defeat.

Now that summer belatedly shows signs of beginning here, there are warnings of extreme ultraviolet levels, and England slapped on maximum-protection sun-cream with the confidence and resolve of men expecting to bat all day. In Zimbabwe, by contrast, advising an English batsman not to remain in the sun for longer than 15 minutes might have seemed an unnecessary precaution.

Alec Stewart, with 153, and Nasser Hussain, 139, both batted for longer than five hours in England's first innings, which reached the heights of 411 for four before a late tumble of wickets ensued in the rush for a declaration and the preconceived notion of 50 minutes' bowling at the Selection XI at the end of the day.

Stewart's innings extended over three days of this rain-affected match and his mastery was unwavering. Several times he hooked Danny Morrison, the one Selection XI bowler of true pace, through midwicket, which was proof enough of his superiority.

Morrison's Test place is held to be in doubt after a long absence with a groin injury, and if New Zealand do not name him in their Test party today England will be content; they fear the devil they know much more than the devil they don't.

Hussain played pokily for much of the morning, partly through a lack of timing, partly through his anxiety not to waste the opportunity to play himself into form on a good pitch. Lunch was imminent when he pulled Kennedy for four, his first authoritative shot of the day, but he proceeded with growing abandon in the afternoon, mastering all comers with a succession of clinical cuts and drives.

Zimbabwe's captain Alistair Campbell had scoffed at England's "superiority complex" but that did not suppress Hussain's determination to consider the forthcoming three-Test series with confidence.

"It was a good wicket, more like English conditions than we found in Zimbabwe," he said. "I was desperate not to get out in the first hour and I used the innings more as a net. We have not played much cricket in the past fortnight and all the batsmen were desperate for a knock.

"We should have applied ourselves more in Zimbabwe. But this is a very impressive side, with a depth in bowling and batting; and the conditions in New Zealand suit us. We are very confident."

If Atherton were to respond to his more intemperate critics and resign at the end of this tour, then Hussain, England's vice-captain, and Stewart, the former vice-captain and the senior professional, would be in contention as likely replacements. But there is no move whatsoever to that end among the England team, and the support Stewart had offered 24 hours earlier was amplified yesterday by Hussain.

"It is blatantly clear that the boys are 100 per cent behind Athers," he said. "There is not a bad word being said about him in the dressing room. He is a top captain and a fine batsman."

It was the afternoon drinks break when Stewart, who had been pummelling the Selection attack to all parts, particularly the third seamer Vaughan and the left-arm spinner Haslam, finally discovered a convenient hamstring strain and headed for the dressing room with a faked limp that would not pass muster in the Kennington Amateur Dramatic Society.

His voluntary departure failed to bring much benefit to Thorpe, who made an edgy half-dozen before mis-pulling Kennedy to midwicket. Hussain's surrender — his slice at the off-spinner Wiseman falling to cover — likewise failed to help White who, with the declaration pressing, moved briskly to double figures and then chipped Wiseman to short midwicket.

Crawley still looks in decent order, as his 35 testified, but England go into their final warm-up match against Northern Districts at Hamilton with only four of their likely Test top seven in form. If their confidence is to be deep-seated, that is one fact they will wish to remedy.

NZC SELECTION XI: First Innings 138 (White 4–15).

ENGLAND XI

First Innings (overnight: 154–3)

†A J Stewart retd hurt	153
N Hussain c Horne b Wiseman	139
G P Thorpe c Morrison b Kennedy	6
J P Crawley c Kennedy b Morrison	35
C White c Spearman b Wiseman	10
D G Cork not out	0
C E W Silverwood c Vaughan b Morrison	4
Extras (lb8, w4, nb7)	20
Total (for 8 dec, 113.5 overs)	427

Fall of wickets, cont: 321, 411, 423, 423, 427

Did not bat: P C R Tufnell.

Bowling: Morrison 28.5–6–81–4; Kennedy 21–3–80–2; Vaughan 22–4–84–0; Wiseman 17–2–83–2; Haslam 25–7–80–0.

NZC SELECTION XI

Second Innings

C J Spearman c Atherton b Cork	6
B A Pocock not out	11
†A C Parore not out	8
Extras	0
Total (for 1, 14 overs)	25

Fall of wicket: 6.

Bowling: Cork 6–1–17–1; Caddick 5–3–3–0; Silverwood 2–1–4–0; Tufnell 1–0–1–0.

Umpires: S D Dunne and D Quested.



Off the hook . . . Stewart on his way to 153 before retiring PHOTOGRAPH: ROSS SETFORD

Stumped Speight starts legal battle for move

MARTIN SPEIGHT has engaged a lawyer in his efforts to leave Sussex. The 29-year-old batsman and wicketkeeper wants his status reduced from List One to List Two to improve his chances of finding another county.

Several counties are interested but his options are limited because regulations prevent him from joining any county who have signed two List One players in the past five years.

Speight has made it clear that to fulfil his ambition in the game he needs to keep wicket, but he has not been able to do so at Sussex. In his view, remaining on List One amounts to a restraint of trade, and he will attend a meeting of the English Cricket Board's registration committee with his solicitor on January 29. "I'm hoping that my status will be changed at the meeting to allow me to move on," he said.

Sussex have lost several key players recently and want him to stay. They feel the terms of his new two-year contract, which even provides for a midseason salary review, are fair.

Racing

Cigar is still world leader

Graham Rock

REVOQUE heads the Free Handicap, 2lb clear of Bahhare. Cigar is the best horse in the world, Helissio the leading thoroughbred on turf and Bosra Sham the most talented filly, according to the International Classification which was announced yesterday.

In a list which caused few sharp intakes of breath, Revoque's superiority over Bahhare, ante-post favourite for the 2,000 Guineas, was the one surprise.

"Competition in the two-year-old division was again weak," said Geoffrey Gibbs, chairman of the committee which adjudges the classifications. He has campaigned for more competition among two-year-olds, "to little effect," he admitted.

At 123, Revoque is the second-lowest champion two-year-old since the basis of the assessments was revised in 1986. Unbeaten in four races, Revoque rounded off his career with a two lengths victory in the Grand Criterium at Longchamp, France's most prestigious race.

Bahhare was arguably more impressive in winning the Laurent-Perrier Champagne Stakes by three and a half lengths from In Command, but John Dunlop's colt swished his tail several times under pressure and his victory was not universally acclaimed. "Two exciting prospects," was how Gibbs summed up the pair.

Pas de Reponse is the top-rated juvenile filly at 116 on the strength of her win in the Shadwell Stud Cheveley Park Stakes, but she is the lowest-rated leading juvenile filly since the system began.

Cigar is 3lb higher than his rating of 1996, the first year in which American horses were included, and he is only the third horse to head the classification for two successive years. He suffered a couple of unwelcome defeats in the autumn, but no-one could doubt his ability or courage, and he dominated American racing for two years.

Helissio, the easy Arc winner, is on 134, the same mark as Trempolino, previously the highest-rated Arc winner of the past decade. Mark Of Esteem is 1lb behind, with Bosra Sham a further 2lb lower.

Wafic Said's filly is the best in the world, 5lb ahead of the American-trained pair Jewel Princess and Yanks Music, who have been rated 126. Timarida, at 124, is the second-best filly in Europe.

Considering the problems that Henry Cecil had in training Bosra Sham, she enjoyed a most successful season. On this side of the Atlantic her performance in the Dubai Champion Stakes, when she trounced Halling, was second in merit only to Helissio's victory at Longchamp.

If she remains sound it will take an exceptional horse of any age or sex to beat her in the forthcoming months.

Gibbs took pains to point out that the International Classification no longer attempts to represent the inherent quality of any thoroughbred — it is solely a retrospective assessment of performance and cannot be used to judge one generation against another.

"As a rule, competition between the three-year-olds and their elders has not been sufficient," he said.

More top-class older horses did stay in training last year, though, notably Anabaa, who was the leading sprinter, Halling, Pentire, Pilsudski, Classic Cliche and Oscar Schindler, who was officially the best stayer.

Their triumphs were described by Gibbs as "the great success story of 1996. Pentire improved 4lb over what he achieved last season and Lammtarra, who had the greater scope, might have improved by as much as 7lb, but we will never know.

"Certainly it does seem to be more popular to keep horses in training longer, and it is a trend which can only be good for racing.

"I know there has been a gnashing of teeth in other areas within the sport, but 1996 was a wonderful year for horses and races."

Taunton

1.20 Nordic Breeze
1.50 D'Naan
2.20 Evangelica
2.50 DI's Last
3.20 The Mine Captain
3.50 Ultimate Smoothie
4.20 Le Khoumf

Going: Good to firm (good in places). ★ Denotes blinkers. ● INSPECTION 7.45am.

1.20 LEVY BOARD JANUARY COND JOCKEYS' H'CAP HURDLE 2m 3f 110yds £2,222

1 12/014-4 VISION OF FREEDOM (58) (C) P Bowen 9-11-10 — D J Kavanagh
2 453-132 NORDIC BREEZE (71) (BF) M Pipe 5-11-7 — B Moore (5) ★
3 0510-04 EURO SINGER (31) P Webber 5-11-0 — E Husband
4 320F33 FLEUR DE TAL (49) W Turner 8-10-13 — J Power (5)
5 40P-111 BURLINGTON SAM (41) A Hobbs 9-10-8 — O Burrows
6 332351 ZINGIBAR (30) J Bradley 5-10-2 — Michael Brennan

TOP FORM TIPS: Nordic Breeze 8, Zingibar 7

Betting: 5-6 Nordic Breeze, 3-1 Burlington Sam, 9-2 Fleur De Tal, 5-1 Euro Singer, 6-1 Vision Of Freedom, 7-1 Zingibar — 6 runners

1.50 PICKERIDGE SELLING HURDLE 2m 1f £1,668

1 4605 ADONISIS (35) D Elsworth 5-11-5 — P Holley
2 000 BABA SAM (24) P Eccles 5-11-5 — Mr R Thornton (5)
3 44-P IL TRASTEVERE (31) Gay Kelleway 5-11-5 — D Bridgwater
4 FPF NORFOLK GLORY (28) D Bassett 5-11-5 — Mr A Holdsworth
5 PRINCE RUDOLF W Turner 5-11-5 — R Willington (7)
6 05-04 SMILEY FACE (29) R Hodges 5-11-5 — J Harris (7)
7 1 D'NAAN (28) (D) M Pipe 4-11-0 — A P McCoy ★
8 0- ROSE OF GLENN (322) B Palling 6-11-0 — R Farrant
9 0-00PP0 WOODLANDS ENERGY (27) P Pritchard 6-11-0 — C Llewellyn
10 U AAVASAKSA (61) A Newcombe 4-10-7 — J Osborne
11 0 BENKAROSAM (34) R Hollinshead 4-10-7 — Gary Lyons
12 P46 PAULTON (27) K Bishop 4-10-7 — R Greene
13 500 SAM ROCKETT (26) P Mooney 4-10-7 — S Ryan (5) ★
14 CONTRACT BRIDGE P Murphy 4-10-2 — W McFarland

TOP FORM TIPS: D'Naan 8, Adonisis 7, Il Trastevere 6

Betting: 5-4 D'Naan, 7-1 Adonisis, Contract Bridge, 8-1 Il Trastevere, 12-1 Smiley Face, 16-1 Baba Sam, 20-1 Paulton, Rose Of Glenn — 14 runners

2.20 STEPHEN LITTLE AND DICK REYNOLDS BOOKMAKERS H'CAP CHASE 4m 2f 110yds £6,038

1 3211F-5 KILLESHIN (47) (CD) H Manners 11-12-0 — A Dowling (7)
2 4614-23 HAVE TO THINK (33) P Nicholls 9-11-6 — D Bridgwater
3 532114 EVANGELICA (40) M Pipe 7-11-6 — A P McCoy
4 11583-4 SUNLEY BAY (29) (C) P Nicholls 11-11-4 — P Hide
5 11223-1 BADASTAN (48) P Hobbs 8-10-10 — G Tormey ★
6 P23P-12 WOODLANDS BOY (41) R Curtis 9-10-0 — D Morris
7 6-12233 FROZEN DROP (36) P Ritchens 10-10-0 — S Fox
8 01P7343- DISTILLATION (468) G Edwards 12-10-0 — Mr R Thornton (5)
9 55-6004 WOODLANDS GENHIRE (36) P Pritchard 12-10-0 — C Llewellyn ★
10 50P0-05 MASKED MARTIN (2) P Rodford 8-10-0 — S Burrough ★

TOP FORM TIPS: Killeshin 8, Badastan 7, Have To Think 6

Betting: 5-2 Have To Think, 7-2 Evangelica, 5-1 Sunley Bay, Badastan, 8-1 Woodlands Boy, 8-1 Killeshin, Frozen Drop, 33-1 Distillation, Masked Martin — 10 runners

2.50 EBF 'NH' NOVICE HURDLE (QUALIFIER) 2m 3f 110yds £2,137

1 034-1P1 EDGEMOOR PRINCE (29) P Hobbs 6-11-10 — A Maguire
2 30-12 SPRING GALE (40) O Sherwood 6-11-10 — J Osborne
3 6- BIG THEO (408) Mrs P Dutfield 6-11-0 — P Holley
4 0/1-005 DERRYS PREROGATIVE (24) A Carroll 7-11-0 — D Bridgwater
5 F53P-2P MARKET MAYHEM (33) J Spearing 7-11-0 — Richard Guest
6 00 MISSED THE MATCH (60) R Pocock 7-11-0 — P McLoughlin
7 0-50 SIERRA NEVADA (82) P Nicholls 6-11-0 — O Burrows (5)
8 004 WEATHER WISE (84) W Turner 5-11-0 — J Power (7)
9 0-0 BROWN WREN (29) P Hobbs 6-10-9 — G Tormey
10 244-63 DI'S LAST (84) M Pipe 7-10-9 — A P McCoy
11 222-644 ELEANORA MUSE (41) Paddy Farrell 7-10-9 — Guy Lewis (3)
12 F05PPP LILLY THE FILLY (29) Mrs B Waring 6-10-9 — R Greene
13 PICCOLINA R Phillips 6-10-9 — J Railton
14 00-0P TINKER'S CUSS (38) A Jones 6-10-9 — S Curran

TOP FORM TIPS: Spring Gale 8, DI's Last 7, Edgemoor Prince 6

Betting: 7-4 Spring Gale, 3-1 Edgemoor Prince, 8-1 Di's Last, 12-1 Weather Wise, Eleanora Muse, 14-1 Market Mayhem, Sierra Nevada, 20-1 Brown Wren — 14 runners

3.20 BICKNOLLER NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE 2m 3f £3,560

1 02211-3 THE MINE CAPTAIN (48) (D) O Sherwood 10-12-0 — J Osborne
2 1/5PP-3P GORDON (28) P Webber 8-11-6 — A Maguire
3 0-3U223 BRIDEPARK ROSE (25) P Ritchens 9-10-12 — S Fox
4 013654 CHRIS'S GLEN (35) J Bradley 8-10-7 — Michael Brennan (5)
5 P3265-5 OLLIVER DUCKETT (68) C Popham 8-10-6 — T O'Connor (7)
6 03RV-563 WINNOW (29) A Turnell 7-10-0 — C Rae (7)
7 053-465 JHAL FREZI (41) (BF) A Barrow 9-10-0 — Mr R Thornton (5)

TOP FORM TIPS: Bridepark Rose 8, Gordon 7

Betting: 9-4 The Mine Captain, 3-1 Bridepark Rose, 9-2 Chris's Glen, 6-1 Jhal Frezi, 7-1 Winnow, 12-1 Olliver Duckett, Gordon — 7 runners

3.50 YARCOMBE NOVICE HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 1f £2,476

1 113141 ULTIMATE SMOOTHIE (24) M Pipe 5-12-0 — A P McCoy
2 55-4 SHOW FAITH (35) R Hannon 7-11-12 — J A McCarthy
3 0/2450- FIONANS FLUTTER (466) D Elsworth 9-11-9 — P Holley
4 308 SAHEL (38) J Neville 9-11-2 — S Curran
5 3-38251 SHIFT AGAIN (44) (D) O Sherwood 5-11-1 — Sophie Mitchell (5) ★
6 334133 ALMAPA (77) (CD) R Hodges 5-10-13 — J Harris (7)
7 314P84 ATH CHEANNAITHE (43) (CD) J Neville 5-10-13 — D Bridgwater
8 04U-P6 CHILI HEIGHTS (31) K Bishop 7-10-8 — R Greene ★
9 0-2FP43 COUNTRY MINSTREL (28) S Dow 8-10-7 — C Rae (7)
10 3PP6-4 LITTLE SHEFFORD (61) M Muggeridge 5-10-6 — I Lawrence
11 14592P SKRAM (41) R Dickin 4-10-6 — A Maguire
12 50-5306 MILLING BROOK (27) J Bradley 5-10-6 — Michael Brennan (5)
13 5P-PP42 PARADE RACER (60) P Murphy 6-10-3 — W McFarland
14 60/0PP- SOBER ISLAND (614) Mrs D Thomas 5-10-0 — Guy Lewis (3)

TOP FORM TIPS: Show Faith 8, Ultimate Smoothie 7

Betting: 5-2 Ultimate Smoothie, 3-1 Show Faith, 5-1 Shift Again, 10-1 Parade Racer, 12-1 Fionans Flutter, Country Minstrel, 14-1 Sahel, 16-1 Skram — 14 runners

4.20 CURLAND HANDICAP HURDLE 2m 1f £2,759

1 231144 YUBRALEE (60) (CD) M Pipe 5-11-10 — A P McCoy
2 111600- LE KHOUMF (310) J Neville 6-11-6 — J Osborne
3 0001-6-1 NINE O THREE (211) (CD) A Newcombe 8-11-1 — D Gallagher
4 3123F-6 FIRST CENTURY (41) (D) B Palling 8-10-12 — A Maguire
5 6-05512 PRIDEWOOD PICKER (21) (CD) (BF) R Price 10-10-4 — D J Kavanagh (5)
6 716843- CHANTRY BEATH (234) P Murphy 6-10-3 — W McFarland
7 213132 GLOWING PATH (25) (D) R Hodges 7-10-0 — J Harris (7)

TOP FORM TIPS: Pridewood Picker 8, Yubralee 7

Betting: 5-4 Yubralee, 7-2 Pridewood Picker, 4-1 Nine O Three, 5-1 Glowing Path, 8-1 Chantry Beath, 8-1 Le Khoumf, 10-1 First Century — 7 runners

Lingfield all-weather Flat card with form guide

1.30 Extremely Friendly
2.00 Second Colours
2.30 Stoney Valley
3.00 Mellors
3.30 Dances With Hooves (nb)
4.00 Star Talent

Going: Standard. ★ Denotes blinkers. Draw: Low numbers best. Figures in brackets after horse's name denote days since latest outing.

1.30 LITTLE ACORNS SELLING HANDICAP 1m 4f £2,224

101 602055- LABUDD (42) (C) R Ingram 7-9-10 — J Stack 8
102 500020- COLOSSE (16) (CD) J Eyre 5-9-8 — S Buckley (7) 13★
103 112560- CARROLLS MARC (27) (CD) C Murray 9-9-3 — J Weaver 1
104 00400-5 ZACAROON (8) J Fitch-Heyes 6-9-3 — D Biggs 6
105 0446-63 AL HELAL (9) J Jenkins 5-9-1 — D Harrison 10★
106 0002-55 SAPPHIRE SON (7) (C) P Clarke 5-8-13 — N Adams 7
107 0060- EXTREMELY FRIENDLY (119) Bob Jones 4-8-13 — M Wigham 11
108 002004- OOZLEM (17) (C) L Montague Hall 8-8-11 — F Lynch (3) 3★
109 00405-5 WARSPITE (8) P Mooney 7-8-10 — J Quinn 2
110 426050- EASTLEIGH (17) (C) R Hollinshead 8-8-10 — Lisa Watson (7) 12
111 50050-0 EFFICACIOUS (9) G L Moore 4-8-6 — N Perham 5
112 43000-6 CALLONESCY (14) D O'Brien 5-8-2 — G Bardwell 9
113 00-0 BROUGHTONS RELISH (13) W Musson 4-7-10 — Declan O'Shea 4
13 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Colosse 8, Zacaroon 7, Sapphire Son 6

1996: Carrolls Marc 5 9 1 J Weaver 13-1 (C Murray) 15 ran

Betting: 4-1 Zacaroon, 9-2 Sapphire Son, 5-1 Oozlem, Colosse, 6-1 Carrolls Marc, Al Helal, 9-1 Extremely Friendly, 12-1 Warspite, Labudd, 14-1 Broughtons Relish

FORM GUIDE - ZACAROON: Prominent, ridden over 2f, one pace, 4l 3rd of 14 behind Arcatura (Lingfield 1m2f clm).
SAPPHIRE SON: Led briefly 3f out, weakened 1f out, 7l 5th of 11 behind Yet Again (Lingfield 1m5f hcp).
AL HELAL: Prominent, led 2f out to inside last, 3l 3rd of 12 behind Supreme Star, with EFFICACIOUS (rec 8lb) well btn 7th (Lingfield 1m5f sell hcp(6)) (AWT) std.
OOZLEM: Headway final 2f, finished well, 4l 4th of 14 behind Arcatura (Lingfield 1m2f sell).
EXTREMELY FRIENDLY: Showed signs of ability over hurdles last month; no show only outing on Flat last year behind Mischief Star (Lingfield 13f hcp, Fm).
COLOSSE: Held up, effort and pushed along over 2f out, soon beaten, 19l 8th of 12 behind Canary Falcon (Wolverhampton 1m4f hcp). Previously caught close home when hd 2nd to Rasayel (Wolverhampton 13f amateur riders hcp).
CARROLLS MARC: Some headway over 2f out, soon weakened, 15l 8th of 12 behind Zuno Flyer (Lingfield 1m4f). Won this race last year, beating Mifak 1l.
WARSPITE: Outpaced 5l out, kept on final 3l, 14l 5th of 12 behind Unawatercubadiva (Southwell 1m3f am hcp).

2.00 PENNY WISE CLAIMING STAKES 1m £2,866

201 23004-1 SECOND COLOURS (8) (CD) M Pipe 7-9-12 — D Harrison 4
202 414021- WAIKIKI BEACH (21) (CD) G L Moore 6-9-8 — Candy Morris 5
203 008021- SOAKING (34) (CD) P Burgoyne 7-9-2 — D R McCabe 6
204 00350-1 MILOS (7) (C) T Naughton 6-8-8 — J Weaver 10
205 65400-6 ONE IN THE EYE (12) Jamie Poulton 4-8-6 — S Drowne 3★
206 0359-06 OUR SHADEE (7) (C) K Ivory 7-8-6 — C Scally 11★
207 40100-0 MULTI FRANCHISE (7) (C) (D) B Gubby 4-8-4 — J Tate 2
208 004600- LAMIK (27) K Ivory 4-8-2 — D Biggs 1
209 209400- MEDLAND (27) (CD) B McMath 7-8-2 — G Bardwell 8★
210 0000-60 RAPIER POINT (10) C Murray 6-8-2 — Nicola Howarth 9★
211 RACHEL'S ROCK G L Moore 4-8-1 — C Rutter 7
11 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Soaking 8, Second Colours 7, Waikiki Beach 6

1996: Mamos 11 8 6 A Clark 9-2 (R J O'Sullivan) 12 ran

Betting: 7-4 Second Colours, 3-1 Waikiki Beach, 4-1 Soaking, 6-1 Milos, 14-1 Our Shadee, 16-1 Multi Franchise, 20-1 Medland, 25-1 Lamik

FORM GUIDE - SECOND COLOURS: Headway 3f out, led 1f out, ran on well, won by neck from Super High (Wolverhampton 1m100y hcp).
WAIKIKI BEACH: Led over 2f out, all out, won by short head from Mediate (Lingfield 1m2f clm).
SOAKING: Held up, led over 2f out, ran on well, beat Barossa Valley 5l (Lingfield 1m hcp).
MILOS: Headway over 4f out, led 3f out, ridden out, won by 2l from Ki Chi Saga (Lingfield 7f sell).
OUR SHADEE: Never near to challenge, 7l 8th of 12 behind Hawaii Storm (Lingfield 7f sell).
MULTI FRANCHISE: Headway 7f out, weakened over 4f out, 15l 9th of 14 behind Tribal Peace (Lingfield 1m2f hcp).

2.30 CAVEAT EMPTOR HANDICAP 2m £2,518

301 01652-5 GUEST ALLIANCE (8) (CD) G L Moore 5-10-0 — Candy Morris 4
302 52284-1 HATTAAFEH (5) (4lb ex) (CD) Miss B Sanders 5-9-13 — S Sanders 8
303 60863-1 SUPREME STAR (8) (4lb ex) (C) P Hedger 6-9-12 — M Varley (3) 9★
304 366311- WOTTASHAMBLES (21) (CD) L Montague Hall 6-9-8 — J Weaver 7
305 4542-03 IN THE MONEY (8) R Hollinshead 8-9-6 — F Lynch (3) 6
306 33144/- KHATIR (929) M Pipe 6-9-5 — T Sprake 5★
307 6/0008/- STONEY VALLEY (697) J Jenkins 7-9-5 — D Harrison 1★
308 55010-4 COLOUR COUNSELLOR (14) R Flower 4-8-3 — J Quinn 2★
309 00/635-3 SASSIVER (7) P Kelleway 7-7-13 — D Wright 6
310 040-0 TURRILL HOUSE (13) W Musson 5-7-13 — C Rutter 10
10 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Wottashambles 8, Supreme Star 7, Sassiver 6

1996: Sir Norman Holt 7 10 0 D Biggs 20-1 (R J O'Sullivan) 14 ran

Betting: 11-4 Wottashambles, 9-2 Hattaafeh, 11-2 Guest Alliance, 7-1 Supreme Star, Stoney Valley, 8-1 Sassiver, 10-1 Khatir, 14-1 In The Money, Colour Counsellor

FORM GUIDE - WOTTASHAMBLES: Held up, headway halfway, led 3f out, soon clear, won by 5l from GUEST ALLIANCE (gave 12lb) (Lingfield 2m hcp).
HATTAAFEH: Headway 5f out, led 1f out, pushed out, won by 2l from Pedaltothemetal, with GUEST ALLIANCE (gave 5lb) another 1½l away 3rd (Lingfield 2m hcp).
SASSIVER: Led 3f out until inside last, no extra, 1½l 3rd of 11 behind Yet Again (Lingfield 1m5f hcp).
SUPREME STAR: Led briefly 2f out, led again inside last, ran on well, won by 1½l from Nothing Doing (Lingfield 1m5f sell hcp).
IN THE MONEY: Prominent, driven along over 3f out, soon beaten, 17l 3rd of 10 behind Stonecutter (Wolverhampton 1m7f clm).

3.00 APPLE A DAY HANDICAP 6f £2,791

401 51420-4 THE INSTITUTE BOY (3) (CD) Miss J Craze 7-10-0 — J Weaver 2
402 3003-21 SHARP IMP (12) (CD) R Flower 7-9-13 — J Quinn 3★
403 43556-1 INVOCATION (12) (CD) G L Moore 10-9-13 — A Clark 4
404 02225-5 MELLORS (12) (D) M Heaton-Ellis 4-9-7 — S Drowne 5
405 000402- ROCK TO THE TOP (16) J Sheehan 3-9-2 — A Morris 7
406 0025-32 ALJAZ (6) (D) Gay Kelleway 7-8-12 — S Sanders 6
407 05001-0 HALBERT (12) (CD) P Burgoyne 8-8-7 — D R McCabe 1★
408 0040-06 SUPERLAO (7) J Bridger 5-8-1 — A Daly (5) 9
409 0040-00 TACHYCARDIA (12) (D) R O'Sullivan 5-7-11 — F Norton 10
410 0040/06- BRIGHT PARAGON (16) (C) (D) K Ivory 8-7-11 — N Adams 8
10 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Sharp Imp 8, Mellors 7, Invocation 6

1996: Random 5 8 12 C Rutter 14-1 (C James) 13 ran

Betting: 11-4 Sharp Imp, 3-1 Invocation, 5-1 Rock To The Top, 6-1 Aljaz, 7-1 Mellors, 8-1 The Institute Boy, 10-1 Halbert, 12-1 Tachycardia

FORM GUIDE - SHARP IMP: Steady headway 2f out, led inside last, ran on well, won by 1l from Thick As Thieves, with SUPERLAO, TACHYCARDIA & HALBERT in rear (Lingfield 6f hcp).
HALBERT: Penultimate outing, made all; hard ridden inside final furlong, ran on gamely, won by ½l from Mystery Matthias (Lingfield 6f hcp).
INVOCATION: Effort halfway, led 1f out, ran on well, won by neck from Hoh Majestic (Lingfield 6f hcp).
ROCK TO THE TOP: Chased winner, hard ridden final furlong, no extra, 1½l 2nd of 6 behind Just Loui (Lingfield 6f hcp).
ALJAZ: Prominent, effort under pressure 1f out, no impression on winner, 2l 2nd of 12 behind Sotonian (Wolverhampton 5l hcp).
MELLORS: Led until over 1f out, one pace, 1¾l 5th of 8 behind Step On Degas (Lingfield 7f hcp).
THE INSTITUTE BOY: Raced 2nd until inside last, weakened. 5½l 5th of 8, placed 4th, behind Sally Slade (Lingfield 5f hcp).

3.30 DOCKLANDS CARS & COURIERS MAIDEN STAKES 1m 2f £2,404

501 /30/320- DANCES WITH HOOVES (68) D Ffrench Davis 5-9-2 — J Weaver 5
502 0/04260- DOCKLANDS COURIER (138) B McMath 5-9-2 — G Bardwell 4
503 000000- TRAPPER NORMAN (61) R Ingram 5-9-2 — J Stack 3
504 55000-0 BROTHER ROY (14) T Mills 4-9-0 — J Connolly (7) 8
505 0-6 NAILS TAILS (14) S Dow 4-9-0 — A Daly (5) 9
506 3460-20 NAKHAL (7) D Murray Smith 4-9-0 — F Lynch (3) 11
507 02020- REGAL SPLENDOUR (84) R O'Sullivan 4-9-0 — D Harrison 1
508 6- NIGHTIDE (16) J Arnold 5-8-11 — A Clark 8
509 5/000-45 SHEI SHAN (8) W Turner 4-8-9 — D McGaffin (7) 7
510 524029- PASSAGE CREEPING (21) S Dow 4-8-9 — S Sanders 10★
511 050005- SQUARE MILE MISS (16) P Howling 4-8-9 — J Quinn 2
11 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: Dances With Hooves 8, Passage Creeping 7, Nakhal 6

1996: Todd 5 9 2 A Clark 11-4 (P Mitchell) 9 ran

Betting: 6-4 Passage Creeping, 5-2 Dances With Hooves, 5-1 Nakhal, Regal Splendour, 14-1 Docklands Courier, 16-1 Nails Tails, 20-1 Square Mile Miss

FORM GUIDE - PASSAGE CREEPING: Chased leaders, kept on to go 2nd inside last, beaten 4l by Royal Carlton (Lingfield 1m mdn stks).
DANCES WITH HOOVES: Headway far side halfway, ridden and weakened over 2f out, 17l 15th of 21 behind Meis Baby (Doncaster 1m hcp, St).
NAKHAL: Led 3f out to 1f out, ran on one pace, 6l 6th of 14 behind Tribal Peace (Lingfield 1m2f hcp). Previously 1½l 2nd to Tawafek, with NAILS TAILS (levels) another 14l away 6th (Lingfield 13f mdn).
REGAL SPLENDOUR: Never better than mid-division, 12l 13th of 26 behind Amber Fort (Newbury 7f app hcp, Sft). Previously raced alone far side, btn 5l by Alpine Hideaway (Leicester 7f mdn app, Firm).
DOCKLANDS COURIER: Prominent until ridden and weakened over 4f out, 29l 11th of 13 behind Farmost (Wolverhampton 1m1f79y hcp).
SQUARE MILE MISS: Chased leaders until faded well over 1f out, 9l 6th of 10 behind River Seine (Lingfield 7f mdn stks).

4.00 FRIEND IN NEED HANDICAP 7f £2,830

601 04425-4 STAR TALENT (8) (CD) Gay Kelleway 6-10-0 — J Weaver 4
602 062008- SHARP 'N SMART (82) (CD) B Smart 5-9-10 — S Sanders 8
603 00149-0 LANCASHIRE LEGEND (7) (CD) S Dow 4-9-10 — A Daly (5) 10
604 0643-03 SEA DANZIG (9) (CD) J Bridger 4-9-8 — D Harrison 9
605 59449-3 BARBASON (12) (CD) G L Moore 5-9-0 — Candy Morris 7
606 0050-00 JUBILEE SCHOLAR (7) K McAuliffe 4-9-0 — F Lynch (3) 2★
607 65004-3 THE FRISKY FARMER (7) W Turner 4-8-11 — T Sprake 11
608 00003-2 PLUM FIRST (10) J Eyre 7-8-8 — R Lappin 6★
609 482000- TYMEERA (44) B Palling 4-8-5 — S Drowne 1
610 000300- SHAYNES DOMAIN (219) (D) R Flower 6-7-10 — F Norton 3★
611 20000-0 INTO DEBT (13) Jamie Poulton 4-7-10 — G Bardwell 5★
11 runners

TOP FORM TIPS: The Frisky Farmer 8, Star Talent 7, Barbason 6

1996: Soaking 6 9 10 J Weaver 4-1 (P Burgoyne) 11 ran

Betting: 5-2 Star Talent, 4-1 Sea Danzig, 5-1 Barbason, 11-2 Plum First, 8-1 The Frisky Farmer, Sharp 'N Smart, 14-1 Lancashire Legend, 16-1 Tymeera

FORM GUIDE - STAR TALENT: Held up, headway over 3f out, nearest finish, 5l 4th of 13 behind Anonym (Wolverhampton 1m100y hcp).
SEA DANZIG: Chased leader 2f, lost place 3f out, one pace final furlong, 4l 3rd of 6 behind Pageboy (Lingfield 6f hcp).
BARBASON: Headway 2f out, stayed on one pace final furlong, 2½l 3rd of 11 behind Sharp Imp (Lingfield 6f hcp).
PLUM FIRST: Headway over 2f out, hung left, stayed on, 4l 2nd of 13 behind Pleasure Trick (Southwell 7f hcp).
THE FRISKY FARMER: Prominent, led briefly 3f out, ridden 2f out, one pace, 3½l 3rd of 12 behind Mitos (Lingfield 7f sell).
SHARP 'N SMART: Effort 2f out, unable to quicken, 5l 3rd of 12 behind Deeply Vale (Lingfield 7f clm).

● Blinkered for the first time today: LINGFIELD 2.00 Medland; 2.30 Khatir. LUDLOW 1.40 Premier Star; 2.40 Bold Acre. TAUNTON 1.20 Nordic Breeze; 3.50 Chili Heights.

Clock worth watching

FAVOURABLE overnight forecasts have raised hopes that today's jump meetings at Ludlow and Taunton will survive morning inspections and Kempton's clerk of the course, Peter McNeile, was yesterday "quite hopeful" that this weekend's big meeting would go ahead, *writes Ron Cox.*

McNeile admitted that racing would not have been possible yesterday, but milder weather is forecast.

If Ludlow beats the frost, Against The Clock (1.40) should be noted in the seller off bottom weight. He has a good run to his name over this course last season, and a switch to Peter Bowen's stable could see him leave recent form behind.

Results

WOLVERHAMPTON

1.40 (1m 100yds): **1, PRIOLO PRIMA,** S Sanders (7-4 fav); **2, Evening In Paris** (5-2); **3, Gold Lance** (7-1). 8 ran. 2½, 1½. (Sir Mark Prescott) Tote: £2.80; £1.10, £1.10, £3.00. Dual F: £5.10. CSF: £7.28.

2.10 (1m 4f): **1, GALAPINO,** M Rimmer (11-4); **2, Barolink The Lad** (20-1); **3, Zahid** (10-1). 6-4 fav Greenspan. 10 ran. 5, 6. (G Brewery) Tote: £4.70; £1.40, £3.50, £2.20. Dual F: £46.20. Trio: £98.00. CSF: £49.54.

2.40 (1m 4f): **1, OPERA BUFF,** A Whelan (8-1); **2, Star Rage** (12-1); **3, Infamous** (14-1). 5-4 fav Celestial Choir. 10 ran. 1, 10. (Miss Gay Kelleway) Tote: £6.90; £2.40, £3.30, £5.10. Dual F: £48.70. CSF: £72.21. Tricast: £906.44.

3.10 (2m): **1, GOLDEN HADEER,** A Clark (4-7 fav); **2, Nosfari** (7-1); **3, Anglesey Sea View** (14-1). 8 ran. 8, 3½. (M Ryan) Tote: £1.90; £1.30, £1.20, £1.80. Dual F: £7.90. Trio: £15.40. CSF: £6.49. Tricast: £32.78. NR: Hunting Ground.

3.40 (6f): **1, FIGLIA,** J Quinn (5-2 jt-fav); **2, Imperial Garden** (5-1); **3, My Girl** (16-1). 5-2 jt-fav Come Too Mamma's. 8 ran. 1¼, 3. (J L Harris) Tote: £4.60; £1.80, £1.30, £8.30. Dual F: £8.00. CSF: £11.39.

4.10 (7f): **1, FOOT BATTALION,** F Lynch (4-1); **2, Ultra Boy** (10-1); **3, Enchanting Eve** (8-1). 11-4 fav Nomore Mr Niceguy. 7 ran. 2½, 6. (R Hollinshead) Tote: £5.30; £1.80, £3.30. Dual F: £20.50. CSF: £39.95.

PLACEPOT: £209.70. **QUADPOT:** £24.20.

● Huntingdon and Windsor abandoned.

Ludlow

1.10 Fitzwilliam
1.40 AGAINST THE CLOCK (nap)
2.10 God Speed You
2.40 Dante's View
3.10 Gunmaker
3.40 Jolly Boat
4.10 Shebang

Going: Good to firm. ★ Denotes blinkers. ● INSPECTION 7.30am.

1.10 MARSHBROOK MAIDEN HURDLE 2m £2,682

1 0 BREAK THE RULES (56) M Pipe 5-11-8 — C Maude
2 02 MR DARCY (34) P Webber 5-11-8 — D Bellamy
3 4 PERCY BRAITHWAITE (26) Miss P Whittle 5-11-8 — K Hibbert (7)
4 5 QUESTAN (63) M Pipe 5-11-8 — G Supple (7)
5 RED LANE J Dowson 7-11-8 — Mr A Dalton
6 00 STEVIE'S WONDER (27) B Llewellyn 7-11-8 — Mr J L Llewellyn
7 4505 BEST FRIEND (54) J Curtis 5-11-3 — Derek Byrne
8 TIME GOES ON R Hodges 5-11-3 — T Dascombe (3)
9 2 FITZWILLIAM (35) (BF) I Balding 4-10-10 — G Bradley
10 80 NOBLE COLOURS (34) S Griffiths 4-10-10 — Mr J Jukes
11 ALISTOVER R Dickin 4-10-5 — X Aizpuru (7)
12 NED'S MEMORY A Streeter 4-10-5 — T Eley

TOP FORM TIPS: Fitzwilliam 8, Mr Darcy 7, Percy Braithwaite 6

Betting: 6-4 Fitzwilliam, 3-1 Mr Darcy, 11-2 Percy Braithwaite, 8-1 Break The Rules, 12-1 Questan, 14-1 Best Friend, 16-1 Time Goes On — 12 runners

1.40 MIDDLETON SELLING HANDICAP HURDLE 2m £2,024

1 3335OF DENOMINATION (44) (D) M Pipe 5-11-10 — C Maude
2 345140 LITTLE HOOLIGAN (37) R Hodges 8-11-4 — T Dascombe (3)
3 F135-P6 ASTRAL INVASION (64) (D) G McCourt 6-11-4 — R Hobson (7) ★
4 0-04 TEE TEE TOO (38) A Carroll 5-10-13 — W Marston
5 P6108-6 LAJADHAL (27) (C) K Bishop 8-10-8 — L Harvey
6 5343 FASTINI GOLD (29) M Usher 5-10-7 — M A Fitzgerald
7 F/543-08 THEM TIMES (38) F Jordan 8-10-0 — L Aspell (3)
8 400/-62 COSMIC STAR (35) P Winkworth 7-10-0 — X Aizpuru ★
9 000/0/- PREMIER STAR (747) K Wingrove 7-10-0 — J Ryan ★
10 450843 SCALP 'EM (57) Dr P Pritchard 9-10-0 — Dr P Pritchard
11 006040 AGAINST THE CLOCK (57) P Bowen 5-10-0 — R Johnson

TOP FORM TIPS: Denomination 8, Fastini Gold 7, Lajadhal 6

Betting: 4-1 Denomination, 5-1 Astral Invasion, Fastini Gold, 6-1 Tee Tee Too, 7-1 Them Times, 8-1 Cosmic Star, 10-1 Lajadhal, Little Hooligan, 16-1 Against The Clock — 11 runners

2.10 TENBURY HANDICAP CHASE 3m £3,566

1 121-422 FIVELEIGH BUILDS (55) (D) Miss L V Russell 10-12-0 — A Thornton
2 1111F1 IMPERIAL VINTAGE (33) (C) (D) Miss V Williams 7-11-5 — N Williamson
3 340-P33 WELL BRIEFED (35) (C) (D) R Buckler 10-11-3 — B Powell
4 132P38 ANDRELOT (31) (D) P Bowen 10-11-3 — R Johnson ★
5 5-42135 DARK OAK (40) (C) J Curtis 11-11-1 — Derek Byrne
6 7P4-123 COOLREE (42) (C) P Nicholls 9-11-0 — M A Fitzgerald
7 332-112 GOD SPEED YOU (24) (CD) (BF) C Morlock 8-10-5 — J R Kavanagh ★
8 32-2352 FORTUNES COURSE (28) J King 8-10-0 — T J Murphy
9 4/6421-5 PANT LLIN (24) (D) F Jordan 11-10-0 — L Aspell (3)

TOP FORM TIPS: Imperial Vintage 8, God Speed You 7, Well Briefed 6

Betting: 7-2 Imperial Vintage, 4-1 Well Briefed, 9-2 Fiveleigh Builds, God Speed You, 5-1 Coolree, 8-1 Fortunes Course, Andrelot, 12-1 Dark Oak — 9 runners

2.40 LONGNYND NOVICE HANDICAP CHASE 2m £2,949

1 0-31212 SCOTTISH BAMBI (27) (CD) (BF) P Webber 9-12-0 — A Thornton
2 FD334U HOLY WANDERER (24) T George 8-11-5 — G Hogan (3)
3 /1143-3 DANTE'S VIEW (29) P Hedger 9-11-0 — D O'Sullivan
4 PFU1-F3 LOBSTER COTTAGE (43) (D) K Bailey 9-10-11 — S McNeill
5 102-02P UK HYGIENE (41) M Hammond 7-10-3 — R Garritty
6 25-6554 BOLD ACRE (27) J Bradley 7-10-0 — R Johnson ★
7 80/2364- DARA'S COURSE (221) Miss P Whittle 8-10-0 — T J Murphy
8 2416-33 NORTHERN SINGER (27) (BF) R Hodges 7-10-8 — T Dascombe (3)
9 0454-5F ICE MAGIC (72) F Yardley 10-10-0 — B Fenton ★
10 040P HUNSON (26) R Dickin 8-10-0 — B Powell

TOP FORM TIPS: Dante's View 8, Lobster Cottage 7, Holy Wanderer 6

Betting: 5-2 Holy Wanderer, 3-1 Scottish Bambi, 6-1 Dante's View, Northern Singer, 7-1 Lobster Cottage, Bold Acre, 8-1 Uk Hygiene, 12-1 Dara's Course — 10 runners

3.10 WELSHPOOL HANDICAP HURDLE 3m 2f 110yds £2,528

1 13218P MISTER BLAKE (26) (D) R Lee 7-11-10 — R Johnson
2 F-01120 QUEEN'S AWARD (33) R Buckler 8-11-10 — B Powell
3 28-5P8P BRINDLEY HOUSE (76) R Curtis 10-11-8 — D Walsh
4 83-7U65 DERRING BRIDGE (173) (C) Mrs S Johnson 7-11-4 — A Thornton
5 5-45UUF WESTERLY GALE (50) (BF) N Henderson 7-11-4 — M A Fitzgerald
6 05454 EVEZIO RUFO (38) N Littmoden 5-11-3 — J R Kavanagh ★
7 3212P4 FIRST CRACK (43) (C) F Jordan 12-11-2 — S Wynne
8 5P-1P46 TIGER CLAW (35) (D) A Hobbs 11-10-13 — Mr G Shenkin (7)
9 R22P32 RARE SPREAD (30) M Pipe 7-10-10 — C Maude
10 0P4200 GUNMAKER (24) B Llewellyn 8-10-4 — N Williamson
11 6-50350 AWESTRUCK (39) B Preece 7-10-0 — T Jenks ★
12 8/P00P-P CRAVATE (38) P Hobbs 7-10-0 — M Moran (7)

TOP FORM TIPS: Mister Blake 8, Queen's Award 7, Evezio Rufo 6

Betting: 3-1 Evezio Rufo, 5-1 Queen's Award, 6-1 Rare Spread, 7-1 Mister Blake, 8-1 Westerly Gale, Tiger Claw, 12-1 First Crack, 14-1 Derring Bridge — 12 runners

3.40 TELFORD NOVICE CHASE 2m 4f £3,014

1 0/0PPP- AEOLIAN (260) Miss P Whittle 6-11-5 — K Hibbert (7)
2 013/-0P3 ARABIAN BOLD (24) R Juckes 9-11-5 — W Marston
3 4PP INCH EMPEROR (56) A Carroll 7-11-5 — T J Murphy
4 4U JOLLY BOAT (27) F Jordan 10-11-5 — S Wynne
5 30-53U8 MERRYHILL GOLD (70) J Curtis 6-11-5 — Derek Byrne
6 335346 WHITE DIAMOND (38) Miss L V Russell 9-11-5 — B Foster ★
7 B03 SNOWDON LILY (34) P Webber 6-11-0 — R Husband (3)

TOP FORM TIPS: Jolly Boat 10, Arabian Bold 8

Betting: 5-4 Arabian Bold, 3-1 Jolly Boat, 6-1 White Diamond, 10-1 Inch Emperor, Snowdon Lily, 14-1 Merryhill Gold, 33-1 Aeolian — 7 runners

4.10 WEATHERBYS 'STARS OF TOMORROW' NH FLAT RACE 2m £1,413

1 5 BLOWING ROCK (26) R Dickin 6-11-5 — X Aizpuru (7)
2 CERTAIN SHOT G McCourt 6-11-5 — R Hobson (7)
3 ITSAHARDLIFE M Hammond 6-11-5 — R Burns (7)
4 JIMSUE C Jones 6-11-5 — Mr L Lay
5 0-0 JUST ANDY (29) B Preece 6-11-5 — Miss L Boswell (7)
6 32 KING OF THE BLUES (30) J King 6-11-5 — M Griffiths (7)
7 MOUNTAIN STORM N Henderson 5-11-5 — T Hagger (7)
8 2 SHEBANG (33) (BF) J Dunlop 5-11-5 — Mr H Dunlop (7)
9 WELSH ASSET K Wingrove 6-11-5 — Mr A Wintle (7)
10 0 SWEET MOUNT (40) N Twiston-Davies 5-11-0 — L Suthern (7)
11 55- VITA NUOVA (265) W Jenks 6-11-0 — Mr A Mitchell
12 JIM'S QUEST P Hobbs 4-10-7 — M Moran (7)
13 SOCIETY TIMES M Pipe 4-10-7 — G Supple (7)

Betting: 5-2 Shebang, 3-1 Mountain Storm, 4-1 Society Times, 9-2 King Of The Blues, 7-1 Itsahardlife, 10-1 Blowing Rock, 12-1 Sweet Mount, Jim's Quest — 13 runners

Honest croupier cashing in their chips
B
49ers



Soccer

FA Cup, third round replay: Sunderland 0, Arsenal 2

Bergkamp gem stuns Roker

David Lacey

ARSENAL gave peace a chance at Roker Park last night — more of a chance, in fact, than they gave Sunderland. A goal of typical audacity by Dennis Bergkamp, who had left his clogs at home this time, and another from Steve Hughes set up the possibility of a home tie with George Graham's Leeds United, who must yet overcome Crystal Palace, in the fourth round.

The most comforting aspect of this game was that, since the Cup no longer allows for second replays, these teams would not be meeting again this season. Unless, of course, they decided to arrange a friendly, which was about as likely as Punch buying flowers for Judy.

This was their third clash in 12 days in Cup or Premiership, and again the atmosphere threatened to be soured by memories of the game at Highbury in September. Arsenal won it 2-0 after two Sunderland players had been sent off and their manager Peter Reid dismissed from the dug-out.

In last Saturday's return league fixture at Roker, Bergkamp became the fifth Arsenal player to be sent off in 10 matches. He was shown the red card for a bad foul on Bracewell which kept the Sunderland midfielder out of the replay. So with Wright and Hartson suspended, Arsène Wenger's team returned to Wearside not so much in form as carrying it.

The neatness of Sunderland's early passing recalled the fright they had given Manchester United at a similar stage of last season's competition, but Adams, Keown and Bould defended calmly and competently. Had Vieira opted to shoot rather than pass after Bergkamp had sent him clear, Arsenal might well have been ahead on the quarter-hour.

Sunderland's first chance came after 21 minutes when, with Bould vainly appealing for offside, Bridges sent Russell through to force Seaman's first save of the night.

Bergkamp, taking dangerous positions, was always capable of turning the game Arsenal's way. Midway through the first half Perez did well to deny him shooting space, then Sunderland were indebted to Mullin for hustling him out of his stride.

By half-time Arsenal appeared to have established the foundations for victory, but the game still awaited a goal. Not its first booking, however. That went to Keown after 41 minutes for clattering into Russell off the ball. Earlier Vieira had caught Williams in the face with a wayward arm but escaped punishment. Not that anybody appeared hell-bent on resuming the earlier hostilities.

And no sooner had the second half begun than a goal duly arrived from the most predictable quarter. Bergkamp appeared to have been let down by his first touch after Merson had slipped the ball through to him on the left, but the Sunderland defenders failed to react and allowed the striker to turn and regain possession.

The rest was pure Bergkamp. With the defence still playing statues he coolly established a shooting angle and chipped the ball beyond the reach of Perez and into the top right-hand corner of the net. Having lost the war, Bergkamp now looked like winning the peace.

In the 55th minute Winterburn all but put the tie beyond Sunderland's reach. A late run took him past the defence to meet Merson's centre from the right. The left-back's header beat Perez but rebounded from the far post.

Four minutes past the hour a typical run by Platt took him clear of the last defender as Merson played the ball through. Perez made a good save, feet-first.

The Platt of old would surely have scored, yet a second Arsenal goal was not far away. Ord's failure to deal with a high ball on the right allowed Bergkamp to nod Merson through for a cross which 20-year-old Stephen Hughes headed in at the far post.

Sunderland: Perez; Hall, Melville, Ord, Kubicki, Williams, Mullin, Kelly, Gray, Russell, Bridges.
Arsenal: Seaman; Keown, Adams, Bould, Parlour, Vieira, Platt, Hughes, Winterburn, Bergkamp, Merson.
Referee: S Dunn (Bristol).



Mercurial Merson . . . Arsenal's speedy forward breaks past the Sunderland defender Richard Ord at Roker Park last night PHOTOGRAPH: BEN RADFORD

Woking rage over ref's Cup call-off

Peter White on further frustration for fans after Manchester City protest to FA

THE players, officials and supporters of non-League Woking were left annoyed and frustrated last night after their FA Cup third-round tie against Coventry City at Highfield Road was postponed one hour before kick-off because the pitch was frozen.

West Ham's game with Wrexham was also called off close to kick-off after dense fog covered Upton Park. This followed news that Manchester City have protested to the FA over the circumstances surrounding the postponement of their third-round tie at Brentford 90 minutes before kick-off on Tuesday night. City said the decision was "unacceptable".

As at Griffin Park, Highfield Road fell victim to a sudden drop in temperature last night. The Worcester referee Gerald Ashby ruled that parts of the pitch were unplayable. Once again thousands of fans were left disappointed after travelling to the game, some hearing the news after being let into the ground.

Both Woking's manager Geoff Chapple and Coventry's Gordon Strachan questioned the decision to postpone the game. Chapple said: "This is a far better surface than the majority that we have played on this season. I came to watch Coventry's recent game against Sunderland and the pitch was 10 times worse that day. This is like Wembley compared to then."

Woking's chairman Phil Ledger said: "I can't believe it. In my opinion the pitch was perfectly playable."

Strachan commented: "We have played on a lot worse. But different referees have different opinions."

Mr Ashby defended his decision, pointing out that the frost had left a very hard area around the centre circle. "I did not believe that players could perform to their best on the surface," he said.

Last night an FA spokesman said the adverse weather had left referees in a Catch 22 situation. "If you play on a rock-hard pitch and a player gets injured, someone will argue that it is the referee's fault," he said. "And when he calls off the game too close to kick-off he risks the wrath of the travelling support and one or both clubs."

Woking's game will now be played on Saturday week. "This is going to cost us an awful lot of money," said Michael Bidmead, the club's ground-safety officer. "There will be very little for us now, because now we will have to foot the police bill twice and that will run into many thousands of pounds.

"Also, all the people who have travelled up on coaches have paid £11 and they won't be getting their money back. It is absolutely scandalous."

FA Cup, third round
Leicester City 2, Southend United 0

Claridge's tap opens the way

Trevor Haylett

NEXT week's Coca-Cola Cup quarter-final may well provide Leicester's best route to Wembley but last night they made progress on a second front as well. Goals either side of half-time did the job nicely against a Southend side whose challenge served only to emphasise the superior opposition Leicester have to face every week in the Premiership.

Steve Claridge and Ian Marshall provided the scoring to help take Martin O'Neill beyond the third round of this competition for the first time as a manager. He now faces his former club Norwich, whom he left just over a year ago, at home in the fourth round a week on Saturday.

Southend came in from the cold to find that the covers had done their job, Filbert Street passing two inspections to provide a suitable surface for a decent game. It was their first match of the year.

Ronnie Whelan ensured the barricades were well manned, putting four in midfield to reinforce a five-man defence. That was less in respect of Leicester's form — they are without a win for five games — more a recognition of his own team's difficulties in keeping their back door fastened. Only Brighton have in the four divisions have conceded more goals.

Still, in the Cup anything can happen — except that in this tie little did for half an hour before Leicester got themselves together enough to take the lead.

With Southend playing behind a solitary striker, at least one of the Leicester defenders was redundant and it was when Marshall stepped forward to thicken the midfield that things started to happen. As Campbell made use of his space down the right, serious questions were asked of the underdogs.

Izzet shot wide and after Campbell's instant pass Claridge was about to unleash a shot when McNally came across with an important block. Then, in the 39th minute, Kaamark sent over a cross from the left, Marshall nodded it down and Claridge needed only a simple prod to send the ball over the line.

There was little to suggest Leicester would need another goal but at the start of the second half they got one anyway.

Parker made good use of the space in front of him as defenders backed off before seeking out the rampaging Marshall, now moved to a striking role alongside Claridge. Marshall went past Dublin before firing home.

Southend introduced Hails in the hope that he might add to his hat-trick on this ground last season but Marshall came closest to another goal, thumping the woodwork nine minutes from time.

Leicester: Keller, Grayson, Kaamark, Marshall, Watts, Prior, Izzet (Wilson, 83min), Campbell, Parker, Claridge, Heskey
Southend: Royce; Harris, Dublin, McNally (Hails, 59), Rogol, Nielsen, Marsh, Byrne (Thompson, 73), Rammell, Williams (Boere, 58), Tilson
Referee K Lynch (Knaresborough)

Scottish Premier Division: Kilmarnock 1, Rangers 1

Gascoigne strikes to limit the damage

Patrick Glenn

A CLOSE-RANGE header from Paul Gascoigne brought Rangers back from the edge of an unlikely defeat with only 13 minutes remaining. Still, the damage sustained — the Ibrox side are now nine points clear of Celtic having played a game more — will give their closest rivals encouragement.

Kilmarnock proved more resistant than of late, thanks to the recovery from illness and injury of some of their more experienced players.

But they were still unable, for the most part, to carry much of a threat towards Goram and spent most of the first half trying to contain Rangers' relentless surges.

The champions were reduced in menace themselves by the late call-off of the Danish striker Andersen because of injury. Compared with the reed-thin but quick and deadly Andersen, the bulky McCoist often looked sluggish.

Before the interval McCoist missed some chances that, at his fittest and sharpest, would not have got away. He looked particularly diminished when he met Moore's perfect centre from the right and headed low to the left of Lekovic. But he could generate no power and the goalkeeper simply had to flop to hold the ball.

McCoist also headed Gascoigne's centre from the left too high, although it was Albertz who was culpable a little later; he was set up by a cross from the darting and feinting Gascoigne but the German headed wide from 10 yards.

Kilmarnock's only scoring attempt before the interval had been Wright's free-kick after two minutes, but they took the lead with their first effort one minute into the second half. Reilly slipped the ball forward to McKee, who took the ball with his right foot just outside the penalty area and beat Goram with a magnificent chip to the far corner.

The home side should have been given the chance to score a second when Petric clearly pulled Wright's shirt inside the Rangers box but the referee, standing within a few yards, ignored the foul.

Kilmarnock: Lekovic; MacPherson, Kerr, Anderson, McGowne, Findlay, Mitchell, Reilly, Wright, McIntyre, McKee.
Rangers: Goram; Cleland, Moore, Gough, Petric, Bjorklund, Ferguson, Gascoigne, McCoist, Albertz, Laudrup.
Referee: K Clark (Paisley).

Hall denies stories of family rift at Newcastle

Michael Walker and Martin Thorpe

SIR JOHN HALL, the Newcastle United chairman, has strongly denied stories that the frantic search to find a successor for Kevin Keegan caused a rift not only in the club's board but within his own family.

Sir John, it was said, favoured Bobby Robson of Barcelona whereas his son Douglas, a director, preferred Kenny Dalglish. But Sir John said yesterday: "Talk of a family feud is ridiculous, an absolute nonsense which has annoyed me.

"What we went through was a process of elimination, which is what every major company would do. A number of names were put on the table and we [had] a thorough discussion on who was big enough for this great club. We ... finished up with Kenny Dalglish. That was a unanimous decision of the board and I'm absolutely delighted he's here."

Arsène Wenger yesterday criticised Keegan for not explaining why he walked out, and warned Newcastle that floating the company on the stock market can have sinister consequences.

"Kevin looked a bit distressed when we played up at Newcastle but that's something all managers go through," said Arsenal's manager. "But the thing that amazes me is the fact that he has not given any reason for his resignation. I feel he should have given an explanation, especially given the prestige he enjoyed at Newcastle. A major part of the manager's job involves communicating with the club's fans."

Like Newcastle, Arsenal are about to float and Wenger blames this for the autumn rumours about his private life and reports that he had resigned because of them. Neither proved to be true but Wenger warns of dark forces at work behind the scenes.

"The moment a club get involved in the world of stocks and shares it gets surrounded by rumours. The intention is to destablise the club, and that is what we experienced at Arsenal. They tried to lower the share price so as to be able to buy cheaply and later sell at a profit. There are well organised people at work; they start rumours, get them spread around and bring about the desired result."

West Ham set to strike as Raducioiu goes

FLORIN RADUCIOIU is to return to his former club Espanyol — a move which will let West Ham bid for Celtic's Pierre van Hooydonk, if he is their chosen striker. The Romanian cost £2.4 million when he moved in the summer, and his return is expected to leave West Ham £1 million out of pocket.

Their manager Harry Redknapp badly needs a striker after injury to Iain Dowie, but the club's managing director said last night that Van Hooydonk, valued by Celtic at £3 to £4 million, is only one of several under consideration.

Ipswich's Danish international Claus Thomsen will join Everton for £900,000 today after completing a medical. Joe Royle, Everton's manager, said Thomsen, 26, had agreed to a 4½-year contract.

Gordon Watson, the Southampton striker, has agreed to join Bradford City after being told by Graeme Souness he has no future at The Dell. Watson, 25, will complete his £500,000 transfer back to Yorkshire less than two years after moving from Sheffield Wednesday for £1.2 million. The proceeds may encourage Souness to try again to sign Matthew Elliott, the Oxford United defender. A previous bid of £1.6 million failed.

Leeds, Derby and Middlesbrough are all reported to have made bids for the Italian international goalkeeper Luca Bucci, rated at £3 million by Parma. He has three caps.

Chelsea admitted yesterday making a "tongue-in-cheek" inquiry about the AC Milan defender Paolo Maldini that was rejected. Regarding the alleged offer of £17 million, Chelsea's managing director Colin Hutchinson said: "No fee was mentioned. I would have wanted the whole of AC Milan for that."

Sheffield Wednesday have dropped their interest in the Spanish striker Moises Garcia Leon, who has joined Celta Vigo instead. But the Wednesday striker Mark Bright is having talks about a £70,000 move to the Swiss club Sion after completing a month's loan at Millwall.



Raducioiu . . . back to Spain

Results

Soccer

FA CUP
Third round

Leicester (1) 2	Southend (0) 0
Claridge 40	13,982
Marshall 48	

(Leicester home to Norwich)

POSTPONED: Coventry v Woking (winners away to Blackburn)

Third-round replays

Sunderland (0) 0	Arsenal (0) 2
15,277	Bergkamp 46
	Hughes 65

(Arsenal home to C Palace or Leeds)

POSTPONED: West Ham v Wrexham (winners away to Peterborough).

BELL'S SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Premier Division

Kilmarnock (0) 1	Rangers (0) 1
McKee 46	Gascoigne 77
16,432	

SCOTTISH LEAGUE
Second Division

Queen of South (0) 0	Clyde (1) 2
1,117	Annand 18, 89

UNIBOND LEAGUE: President's Cup: First-round replay: Farsley Celtic 2, Guiseley 0.
DR MARTENS CUP: Third round: Raunds Tn 2, Tamworth 1. Postponed: Baldock Tn v Tonbridge.
PONTINS LEAGUE: First Division: Postponed: Notts Co v Port Vale. Second Division: Hull 1, Shrewsbury 3. League Cup: Group One: Burnley 4, Carlisle 1; Wigan 3, Oldham 3. Group Two: Bradford C 2, Huddersfield 4; York 3, Barnsley 0. Group Four: Doncaster 6, Scunthorpe 3. Group Five: Derby 0, Walsall 1.
AVON INSURANCE COMBINATION: First Division: Bournemouth 3, Portsmouth 0. Postponed: Ipswich v Tottenham; Southampton v Wimbledon.
WELSH CUP: Fourth-round replays: Conwy 2, Caernarfon Tn 0. Postponed: Ebbw Vale v Aberystwyth.
LEAGUE OF WALES: Welshpool 0, Holywell 1 (abandoned after 25min due to frost).
EUROPEAN SUPER CUP: First leg: Paris St Germain 1, Juventus 6.

Rugby Union

REPRESENTATIVE MATCH: Cancelled: Scotland U-18 v Watsonians U-21.
ANGLO WELSH CUP: Pool 2B: Newport 13, Saracens 19.
CLUB MATCHES: Falmouth 10, Llanelli 31. Cancelled: Pontypool v Swansea; RAF v Combined London OB.

Rugby League

SILK CUT CHALLENGE CUP: First round: Saddleworth 36, Ellenborough 0. Second round: Walney Central 17, Millom 10.

Tennis

AUSTRALIAN OPEN (Melbourne): Men: Second round: C Moya (Sp) bt P McEnroe (US) 3-6, 6-0, 6-3, 6-1; T Woodbridge (Aus) bt S Simian (Fr) 6-3, 6-3, 7-5; D Van Scheppingen (Neth) bt E Ran (Isr) 6-2, 6-2, 6-2; G Schaller (Aut) bt A Corretja (Sp) 4-6, 6-3, 6-3, 4-6, 6-3; M Chang (US) bt R Reneberg (US) 6-3, 7-5, 6-1; K Braasch (Ger) bt M Gustafsson (Swe) 3-6, 7-5, 6-4, 6-4; B Karbacher (Ger) bt T Johansson (Swe) 6-3, 6-2, 7-6; M Washington (US) bt S Sargsian (Armenia) 6-1, 6-0, 6-2; T Enqvist (Swe) bt R Fromberg (Aus) 6-4, 6-4, 7-5; M Rios (Chile) bt M Joyce (US) 6-0, 6-4, 6-2; T Henman (GB) bt G Raoux (Fr) 6-3, 6-3, 6-4; F Mantilla (Sp) bt F Meligeni (Br) 6-2, 6-4, 6-1; S Bruguera (Sp) bt M Larsson (Swe) 4-6, 6-3, 6-4, 7-6; A Boetsch (Fr) bt L Roux (Fr) 6-4, 6-4, 6-1; A Medvedev (Ukr) bt M Stich (Ger) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 4-6, 6-7. Women: Second round: S Appelmans (Bel) bt A Grossman (US) 6-4, 6-1; N Zvereva (Belarus) bt W Probst (Ger) 7-6, 6-3; K Po (US) bt A Sugiyama (Japan) 6-0, 4-6, 6-8; S Graf (Ger) bt L Neiland (Lat) 7-5, 6-2; L Davenport (US) bt F Perfetti (It) 6-2, 7-5; K Boogert (Neth) bt R Grande (It) 6-3, 7-5; M Pierce (Fr) bt N Medvedeva (Ukr) 6-2, 6-2; M Kochta (Ger) bt A Ellwood (Aus) 6-0, 4-6, 6-1; I Gorrochategui (Arg) bt G Fernandez (US) 7-5, 7-6; R Hiraki (Japan) bt B Schultz-McCarthy (Neth) 0-6, 6-1, 6-4; T Tanasugarn (Thai) bt J Taylor (Aus) 6-4, 6-3; A Carlsson (Swe) bt P Hy-Boulais (Can) 2-6, 6-3, 6-0; C Martinez (Sp) bt A Gersi (Cz) 6-2, 7-6; M Lubiani Serna (Sp) bt L Lee (US) 7-6, 7-6.

Golf

GOLDWIN PRO-AM (Mount Irvine Bay, Tobago): Third-round leaders: 206 A Sherborne 66, 70, 72. 211 G Furey 66, 69, 74. 212 G J Brand 69, 74, 69. 214 M Poxon 72, 72, 70; R Lee 72, 71, 71. 216 W Longmuir 73, 72, 71. 217 R Boxall 75, 69, 73. 218 P Way 77, 68, 73. 219 R Winchester 76, 76, 67; S Bottomley 73, 75, 71; P Carrigill 72, 72, 75. 221 S Richardson 73, 77, 71; D Jones 75, 75, 71. 222 D Lloyd 74, 74, 74. 229 P Townsend 73, 79, 77. 234 L Kirton 76, 81, 77.

Badminton

JAPAN OPEN (Tokyo): Selected: Men: First round: P Knowles (Eng) bt H Shimizu (Japan) 15-4, 15-2; P-E Hoyer-Larsen (Den) bt C Haughton (Eng) 15-12, 15-11; D Hall (Eng) bt Hing Yu-da (Tai) 13-15, 15-11, 15-3. Second round: T Stuer-Lauridsen (Den) bt Knowles 15-7, 15-6; P G Christensen (Den) bt Hall 15-11, 15-6. Doubles: First round: S Archer/C Hunt (Eng) bt Chem Chin-zen/Wei Chun-yi (Tai) 15-5, 15-6. Women: First round: J Mann (Eng) bt M Borg (Swe) 2-11, 12-9, 11-2. Doubles: First round: Mitsui/H Mizui (Japan) bt D Kellogg/J Wright (Eng) 15-7, 17-14.
U-21 EUROPEAN TEAM CHALLENGE (Telford): England v Sweden: M Edge (Lancs) bt F Bergstrom 6-15, 15-7, 15-9; E Chaffin/S Hardaker (Surrey/Kent) bt J Holgersson/J Karlsson 15-5, 15-10.

Basketball

NBA: Boston 116, Golden State 108; Atlanta 95, Minnesota 93; Houston 108, New York 86; Chicago 108, Washington 107; Phoenix 110, Denver 101; Portland 95, Detroit 86; LA Lakers 91, Vancouver 81; Sacramento 105, Indiana 98 (ot).
7-UP TROPHY: Quarter-finals, first leg: Birmingham 77 (Dorsey 22, Lloyd 21, Wilks 13), Leicester 95 (Rainking 24, Phoenix 20, Waldron 17).
MEN'S EUROLEAGUE: Group G: Panathinaikos 90, Sevilla 71; Ljubljana 96, Pau-Orthez 86. Group H: Efes Pilsen 74, Split 64.

Bowls

WELSH INDOOR MASTERS (Llanelli): First round: I Schuback (Aus) bt G Williams (Wales) 7-6, 7-3; T Allcock (Eng) bt J Henry (Ire) 3-7, 7-6, 7-4.

Hockey

MEN'S CLUBS: Cannock 6, Beeston 2; London Univ 1, Oxford Univ 2.

Ice Hockey

NHL: Detroit 3, Los Angeles 3 (ot); New Jersey 4, Boston 2; Philadelphia 3, Montreal 2; Pittsburgh 3, Dallas 1; Vancouver 4, Florida 4 (ot).

Motor Sport

DAKAR RALLY: 11th stage (Kidal to Timbuktoo): Cars: 1, J-P Strugo (Fr) Mitsubishi 5hr 40min 11sec; 2, P Siriwatanakun (Thailand) Mitsubishi at 3.18; 3, K Shinozuka (Japan) Mitsubishi 3.22. Overall: 1, Shinozuka 48hr 46min 35sec; 2, Fontenay at 45sec; 3, Saby 9.35. Motorcycles: 1, J Lewis (US) KTM 5hr 54min (00 secs); 2, O Gallardo (Sp) Cagiva at 9.10; 3, D Castera (Fr) Yamaha 11.33. Overall: 1, Peterhansel 52.08.08; 2, Arcarons at 1.28.37; 3, Gallardo 2.19.52.

Real Tennis

BRITISH PROFESSIONAL DOUBLES (Queen's): Final: L Deuchar/M Gooding bt N Wood/A Phillips 6-3, 6-5, 5-6, 6-4.

Snooker

EUROPEAN OPEN (Blackpool): Eighth qualifying round (last 64): D Henry (Scot) bt P Cavney (Eng) 5-4; D Roe (Eng) bt B Jones (Eng) 5-3; F O'Brien (Ire) bt D Reynolds (Eng) 5-2; A Burnett (Scot) bt I Brumby (Eng) 5-3; E Henderson (Scot) bt B Morgan (Eng) 5-3; J Birch (Eng) bt W Jones (Wales) 5-3; J Burnett (Scot) bt M Judge (Ire) 5-3.

Fixtures

Soccer

PONTINS LEAGUE: Premier Division: Nottm Forest v Liverpool (7.0); Sheff Wed v Stoke (7.0).
PONTINS LEAGUE CUP: Group Three: Man C v Stockport (7.0).

Rugby Union

CLUB MATCHES: Currie v Heriots FP (7.0); Bonymaen v Neath (6.45).

Basketball

7-UP TROPHY: Quarter-final, first leg: Leopards v London T (7.0).

Hockey

MEN'S CLUBS: Brooklands v Cannock (8.0).

Sport in brief

American Football

Alton Byrd, the former Great Britain basketball player, has taken over as London Monarchs' general manager. With the side preparing to start their fifth World League season on April 13 against Frankfurt Galaxy, the American-born 39-year-old said: "There's more to this team than just a 10-week season. My aim is to put bums on seats at Stamford Bridge."

Byrd will remain a director and shareholder at Crystal Palace basketball club.

A former topless dancer who accused the Dallas Cowboys Michael Irvin and Erik Williams of sexually assaulting her at gunpoint has been charged with making malicious allegations. Nina Shahravan, who recanted her story, faces six months' imprisonment and a $2,000 (£1,200) fine if convicted.

Rugby Union

Consternation has greeted the unveiling of Australia's new team jersey, on which a multicoloured pattern replaces the traditional essentially all-gold design. "It looks like a dog's breakfast," said the former Wallaby Peter FitzSimons.

Rugby League

Salford Reds have strengthened their pack for the 1997 Super League season by signing David Hulme and Esene Faimalo from Leeds Rhinos, *writes Paul Fitzpatrick*. Hulme, 32, who can also play at half-back and in the centre, played eight times for GB.

Cricket

Warwickshire are preparing a £2.5 million plan for an eight-lane indoor cricket school next to Edgbaston which they hope to finance as a joint venture with Birmingham City Council.

Basketball

Colin Irish, the former England forward who has been playing in France with Cholet, is to join Manchester Giants, *writes Robert Prone*.

صكنا من الاصل

Tennis

Henman in mood to conquer Chang

Stephen Bierley in Melbourne watches Britain's finest brush aside a Frenchman to earn a contest with the No.2 seed

AT THE beginning of the Australian Open Pete Sampras was asked who he thought were the rising stars of the future. He had seen this one coming a galaxy off and a huge grin spread over his face. "You want me to say Tim Henman, huh?"

Yesterday, after Henman had secured a third-round meeting with the No. 2 seed Michael Chang tomorrow, the praise he received from his beaten opponent Guillaume Raoux was nothing like so obviously solicited and it was perfectly genuine.

The bespectacled Frenchman, beaten 6-3, 6-3, 6-4, admitted he had been quite incapable of troubling the British No. 1. "Tim has a great feeling for match play. He is intelligent and always does those things you are least expecting. All the rubbish has been cleared out of his game and potentially he could beat anyone in the world right now."

The conditions could hardly have been more different from Henman's first-round match. Then, the heat was withering. Yesterday, a gusty wind blew early in the morning and by midday great scuds of ragged grey cumulus were rushing in from the west.

This was last summer's Wimbledon revisited for Henman; then, in his fourth-round match against Sweden's Magnus Gustafsson, he was on and off court half a dozen times.

It was not quite as bad yesterday but there were several interruptions, mostly because of drizzle which made the court slippery; and one sharp downpour forced a substantial mid-afternoon stoppage.

The silver gulls, which fly up the Yarra river and are often a feature of cricket at the nearby Melbourne Cricket Ground, flapped about rather mournfully, recalling wet days at Eastbourne, although the altogether more cheerful Australian magpie-larks whistled encouragement from the retractable roof of the centre court which had been closed to shut out the elements.

And then there was the large contingent of ebullient British fans, in suitably high spirits, who cheered Henman to the leaden skies. Rather less decorous than SW19, but Henman clearly loved it. "They rise to a good shot and you feed off each other."

Raoux, a thoroughly engaging doubles specialist whose enthusiasm so lifted the France team against Sweden last November, joined in the fun, conducting the motley choir with his racket at one of the drizzle breaks.

The 26-year-old Frenchman believes Henman can beat Chang. "It is not as if Tim is actually playing out of his skin," he said. "He is playing well within himself and using 100 per cent of his potential. He never came down to my level."

The wind was exceedingly tricky yet throughout Henman served with absolute authority, presenting Raoux with only two break points which he snatched away before the Frenchman had time to savour the luxury.

After Henman was beaten by Boris Becker in the semi-finals of the Grand Slam Cup late last year, the German expressed surprise that the Briton, given the excellence of his serve, did not follow it into the net more frequently. "It was something my coach David Felgate and I had decided on, and Boris's comments reiterated the point," Henman said then.

Chang is one of the game's most assiduous retrievers, although he is less comfortable against serve-and-volley. Henman plans to be suitably aggressive tomorrow; he will attempt to dictate the pattern and flow of the match.

It is not in Henman's nature to get carried away by success but there is no doubting his current confidence and the belief that he can defeat Chang, who lost two Grand Slam finals last year, against Becker here and Sampras at Flushing Meadow.

Chang was equally authoritative in his second-round match, defeating his fellow American Richey Reneberg 6-3, 7-5, 6-1. This is one of the surfaces Chang most enjoys and clearly it will be a huge test for Henman. They have never met before.

Chile's Marcelo Rios (No. 9 seed) continued to ooze class with a straight-sets victory over another American, Michael Joyce, and Sweden's Thomas Enqvist (7) had a similarly commanding win over Australia's Richard Fromberg.

But another seed, Michael Stich (15), followed his compatriot Becker out of the tournament, beaten in five tough sets by the Ukrainian Andrei Medvedev.

The former Wimbledon champion took an early lead under the centre court floodlights but Medvedev, ranked 36 in the world, powered back to take the next two sets before winning 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 4-6, 9-7 in just under 3¼ hours.

But Germany enjoyed one notable win, Kirsten Braasch knocking out Gustafsson, the No. 12 seed, 3-6, 7-6, 6-4, 6-4.



Head over heels . . . admiring fans hunt Tim Henman's autograph in Melbourne yesterday PHOTOGRAPH: MICHAEL STEELE

Epic end to seven-hour doubles

A FIRST-ROUND doubles match ending with a marathon 29–27 final set proved that the crash-bang approach has not entirely taken over the men's game.

The local pair Jon Ireland and Wayne Arthurs broke the Australian Open record with their 6–3, 3–6, 29–27 win over the Italians Cristian Brandi and Filippo Messori. The tournament's previous longest set was a stroll of 23–21, set in 1990.

This epic, played on an obscure outside court in a remote corner of Melbourne Park, lasted more than seven hours with rain breaks. "That was the most exciting match I have ever played," said the clearly eccentric Ireland, who unsurprisingly added: "We didn't want it to go that long."

Graf in new money probe

Russell Thomas

STEFFI GRAF's tangled finances are the subject of a fresh investigation, this time by the sport's ruling body into allegations that she accepted appearance fees worth more than $1 million in Germany alone.

German prosecutors in the tax-evasion trial of her father Peter confirmed that a lawyer acting for the Women's Tennis Association had phoned them to ask for details of payments to the world No. 1.

But they added: "We will have to look at any request and check it carefully. There are German laws on tax secrecy."

Under WTA rules, players who accept appearance money can be punished by a fine of up to $50,000 (£30,000) and a 90-day ban. They must also repay any money received.

The German Tennis Federation (DTB) admitted in September at the trial that it had paid Graf hundreds of thousands of dollars each year for "services and advertising" in connection with DTB-run events in Hamburg and Berlin where she has usually been the main attraction.

The DTB chief Guenter Sanders conceded that money, said to be $150,000-$270,000 a year between 1990 and 1993, was paid to ensure the events had a big name.

Reports from Germany yesterday said that if the defence arguments in the trial are not accepted by the court, Peter Graf will probably be sentenced a week tomorrow, a day before the Australian Open women's singles final.

Graf, top seed in Melbourne, was asked whether she would consider quitting the Open if that happened. "No," she replied. "I wouldn't even have started it, because I knew when the trial might end."

Earlier Graf was 4–0 down in the first set against Latvia's Larisa Neiland before recovering magnificently to win 7–5, 6–2. . .

Rugby Union

English clubs face import quotas

Robert Armstrong

ENGLISH clubs may have to include a minimum quota of England-qualified players in their line-up for next season's European Cup if moves by the home unions to establish tougher eligibility rules prove successful.

Lawyers believe measures to protect the national identity of club sides in the competition could be implemented without infringing EC employment laws relating to the free movement of players.

The Rugby Football Union has been exploring the possibility of restricting the "foreigners" participating in major competitions to two per club per match. Soundings on the International Board and the Five Nations Committee indicate that the Scots, Irish and Welsh would support a policy reducing the outflow of Celts to English clubs.

However, the biggest threat to English rugby is the number of French internationals wanting to take advantage of the high salaries available at half a dozen English clubs. Thomas Castaignède, Emile Ntamack and Olivier Roumat have together engaged an agent to negotiate contracts with the highest bidder from among the top London clubs, Wasps, Harlequins, Saracens and Richmond.

"If we don't do something about the free-for-all in the European transfer market, within a couple of seasons you could have the bizarre prospect of an English club packed with highly paid Frenchmen playing a French club in the European final," a member of the RFU executive committee said yesterday. The RFU is also alarmed at the demands of the top clubs for more money, which they would use to buy players from abroad.

European Rugby Cup Ltd, which controls the tournament and the sale of television rights, is sympathetic to the aim of retaining the national integrity of clubs in order to enhance their appeal to national sponsors and advertisers within the countries involved. The homogeneous European image that a number of English clubs are developing could, it is thought, take the edge off the national rivalries that give the competition much of its flavour.

Despite the historic Bosman ruling which permits the free movement of professional footballers within Europe, lawyers believe a powerful case can be mounted by rugby administrators who want to prevent the European Cup, which is in only its second year, from becoming a meaningless competition between multinational sides dominated by the top 100 French players. Its competitive and commercial value depends as much on the national contrasts between clubs as on the diversity of individual talent.

Townsend neck injury gives Scotland a fright

Gordon Lyle

GREGOR TOWNSEND, Scotland's versatile back, is in danger of missing the opening match of the Five Nations Championship against Wales at Murrayfield on Saturday after injuring his neck in training.

He had to be replaced in training yesterday by Duncan Hodge, the uncapped Watsonian stand-off, who has been withdrawn from the Scotland A team to meet Emerging Wales at Goldenacre tomorrow.

The mercurial Townsend, picked at inside-centre to win his 22nd cap, is considered one of Scotland's few world-class players and it will be a huge blow if he is forced to drop out.

His importance was underlined by Richie Dixon, Scotland's coach, saying that a final decision on the Northampton player might be delayed until the kick-off. "It will depend on what the medics tell us. But we have never been in the situation of endangering a player's health for the sake of one game," he said.

Almost certainly Ronnie Eriksson, who has previously won two caps, would take over at centre, with Hodge going on the bench.

Another Scotland player keeping a low profile at Murrayfield was Kenny Logan, after it emerged that Saracens are to step up their bid to sign the Stirling County wing with a package believed to be worth £70,000-£100,000 a year. Mark Evans, Saracens' director of rugby, said: "Discussions have progressed and we have reached an advanced stage."

● England's pack leader Jason Leonard was one of seven players who could not take part in a squad session in freezing fog at Bisham Abbey. The others carrying injuries were Will Carling, Tim Rodber, Graham Rowntree, Neil Back, Tony Underwood and Lawrence Dallaglio.

However, the Bristol lock Simon Shaw, who has missed his club's past two matches, proved his recovery from a back injury by taking a small part in the training session.

Rugby League

Paris eyes set on cup success

Paul Fitzpatrick

PARIS ST GERMAIN, the French Super League club, will take part in this season's Silk Cut Challenge Cup but will play their games in England.

The Paris president Jacques Larroze, dismissing reports that the club were 95 per cent certain not to play, said that because the Charlety Stadium was not available during February they had asked to play in England.

Peter Mulholland, the club's Australian coach currently preparing a squad of players down under, confirmed Paris's ambitions. "My players have been training solidly since New Year's Day and we have one goal: to perform well in the Challenge Cup."

There was an upbeat mood around the club yesterday after discussions in Paris on Tuesday between French officials and Maurice Lindsay, the game's chief executive.

"We had a tremendously productive meeting," said Lindsay. "Many items were confirmed, including a new contract with the French television company Canal Plus."

It has also been agreed that in August, when Parisians traditionally go on holiday, PSG will play two games in the French rugby league heartlands in the south; the match against Warrington Wolves is likely to be at Biarritz and the game with Halifax Blue Sox at Narbonne.

France recall Galthié for Dublin

FABIEN GALTHIE returns to a familiar-looking France side for their opening Five Nations Championship match against Ireland in Dublin on Saturday. He replaces Guy Accoceberry, who gave a lacklustre display at scrum-half in France's defeat by South Africa in November.

With Olivier Roumat and Philippe Saint-André injured, the national coach Jean-Claude Skrela has retained the Toulouse lock Hugues Miorin and Brive winger David Venditti, generally preserving the side that faced the Springboks late last year.

He has slightly reshuffled the back row, restoring Fabien Pelous to No. 8 with the captain Abdel Benazzi and Philippe Benetton on the flanks, but the main change is the arrival of Pierre Villepreux as assistant coach.

"I'm looking after the backs," said Villepreux. "In two days of training I've had time to adapt the frame of mind in this squad.

"As for Jean-Claude's game plans, they are exactly the same as mine. What we need to work on this season is not losing the ball and being able to keep it in play. I don't want to see any aimless up-and-unders either."

Ireland's recent 37–29 defeat by Italy should not encourage French overconfidence, Skrela warned. "It would be a big mistake to underrate them. They are a team with a lot of spirit."

FRANCE: J-L. Sadourny; E Ntamack, R Dourthe, T Castaignède, D Venditti; A Penaud, F Galthié; F Pelous, P Benetton, A Benazzi (capt), H Miorin, O Merle, F Tournaire, M Dal Maso, C Califano.

Lions leave no stone unturned

Manager to cast his net far and wide for the right players to beat South Africa

David Irvine speaks with Fran Cotton



Cotton . . . 'no compromise'

FRAN COTTON, the Lions manager, and his fellow selectors Ian McGeechan and Jim Telfer are prepared to go beyond the national squads — perhaps even watching club matches in preference to internationals — to unearth players they feel are capable of producing the type of rugby necessary to defeat South Africa in this summer's Test series.

"We have agreed a playing philosophy, a style we believe can be successful," said Cotton, "and have gone through each position setting out the requirements we need. This could even mean that some good players may not be considered. But at the end of the day we must have men who fit into the style we want."

Cotton is by no means certain that any of the home nations are selecting the sort of players — especially openside flank forwards with pace, full-backs with counter-attacking flair, and wings capable of beating defenders — they are seeking. "So we may have to go deeper than the national squads, because our objectives are different to theirs. We have to win a Test series this summer, whereas they are building towards the next World Cup in 2¼ years' time."

Cotton is adamant that the proposed style, essentially broader than England, Wales, Scotland and Ireland have played so far this season, is essential if the Lions are to succeed. "And there can't be any compromise on that front. It's going to take us until the first Test to find out the best team. After all, we are calling on men from four different countries.

"That's the challenge for Jim and Geech, because they have just five weeks in which to make them comfortable with the style."

Cotton says the selectors could probably name a dozen squad members now and, by midway through the Five Nations, be able to pencil in all but nine or 10. But those, he says, will pose the biggest problem. "Generally that's been a problem with Lions tours: they would get the first 22 right but the other eight were not good enough."

Unlike the last Lions management, who chose their squad on the Sunday after the Five Nations ended, Cotton and his colleagues will give themselves an extra two weeks. "That weekend Ireland had stuffed England in Dublin and that caused some confusion," said Cotton. "They focused on that rather than what had gone on for the rest of the season, and mistakes were made."

For this summer's tour the Lions will have 35 players instead of 30 (two full teams, a third scrum-half, hooker and prop-forward as well as a utility back and forward), which may avert the need to send home for replacements.

Cotton feels the selectors are to some extent hamstrung, especially in England, by the absence of another level of real competition between the club and international games. "I'd love to see a match in which Jeremy Guscott and Will Greenwood played against Will Carling and Phil de Glanville. As it is, no one yet knows what England's best midfield combination is. Overall we need matches that can help us sift out the talent."

He despairs of England choosing Mike Catt at full-back or fly-half — "he's an inside-centre" — and Scotland's choice of Gregor Townsend at centre instead of stand-off. "Maybe the Scots have had to compromise because of a lack of cover at centre, but in my view fly-half is the most influential position and in Townsend they have one of the few men in Britain who could be called world-class there in terms of creative play."

Cotton is confident, however, that the Lions can match, and probably better, the Springboks at the line-out and centre, two areas which have been problematical in the past.

"Above all we must have a solid front five and a back row with pace and good footballing skills to provide the link with the backs to make a more expansive game. If we get involved in a war of attrition near to the scrum we have no chance."

He does concede that captaincy may be a problem. As yet the selectors have no definite ideas. "It has to be someone who is sure of his Test place." But he did note with satisfaction that last year's Scotland skipper Rob Wainwright was back in action and would lead his side against Wales on Saturday.

One fear, highlighted by the continuing cold spell, is the backlog of club games now building, many of them key league and cup fixtures for which clubs will want to draw on their best players.

Cotton asks that they should exercise some restraint and hopes to discuss the matter with the rugby directors of the leading clubs. "If our key men are asked to play in every game, and remember the season ends with the Pilkington Cup final the day before we assemble, that could completely knacker up a Lions tour. At the end of the day it is in everybody's interest that the Lions do well."

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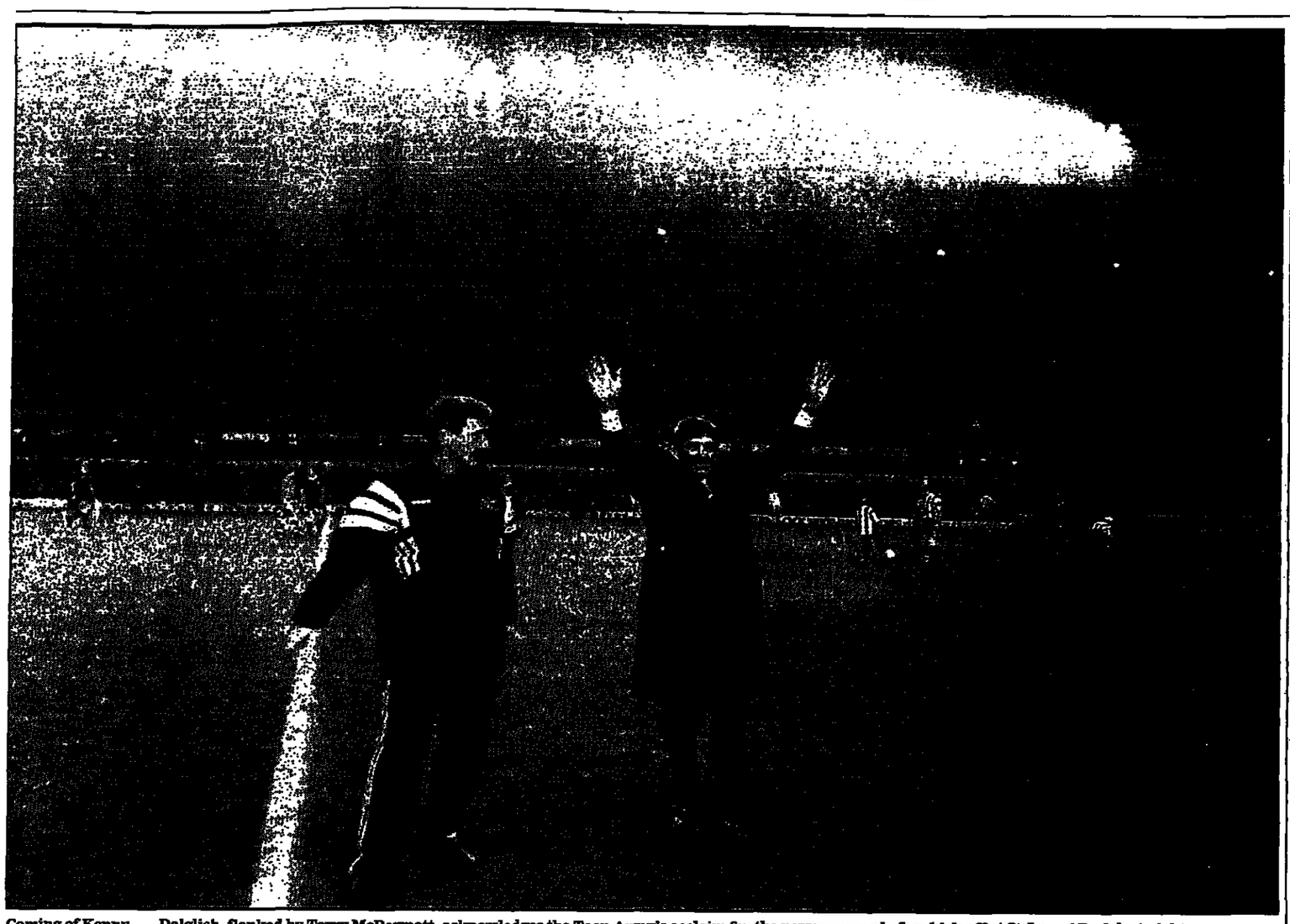
Sun shines on England's batsmen, page 13

Fans rage as Cup is frozen out, page 14

Henman goes from strength to strength, page 15

Twickenham to limit imports, page 15

SportsGuardian



Coming of Kenny . . . Dalglish, flanked by Terry McDermott, acknowledges the Toon Army's acclaim for the new manager before kick-off at St James' Park last night DAN CHUNG

FA Cup, third round replay: Newcastle United 1, Charlton Athletic 1 (after 90min)

Stressful start to Dalglish reign

Michael Walker

THE fog on the Tyne last night made it difficult to see whether the new dawn at St James' Park had arrived or not. After 90 minutes Newcastle and Charlton required extra time to see who would go through to the fourth round.

As at The Valley in Kevin Keegan's last match in charge, the score was 1-1, Mark Robson's 55th-minute free-kick equalising Lee Clark's 32nd-minute opener, and Kenny Dalglish may already be familiar with Keegan's frustrations.

A deafening noise greeted the emergence of Dalglish and Terry McDermott on to the pitch. "Greet the new managerial team at Newcastle United," boomed the Tannoy. The new era was upon us.

Dalglish had said at his introduction on Tuesday night that he would not be choosing the side to face Charlton, but it was still his name that appeared alongside "manager" on the team sheet.

Not that there were any dramatic changes in the line-up; Ginola coming in for Elliott was the only change from Saturday.

However, within seconds of the start it was apparent the new manager was in control. Standing, as he always has, at the edge of the dug-out, Dalglish was pointing and shouting orders in the first minute.

There was almost a fairy-tale start, too, when after 40 seconds Ginola crossed but Shearer failed to connect at the near post. Ginola, looking livelier than for a long time, was clearly out to impress the new man, and on the opposite flank Gillespie's crossing was better than of late.

Even that, though, did not protect the young Irishman from a Glaswegian tongue-lashing midway through the first half. Maybe Dalglish was frustrated as by then Newcastle were struggling for cohesion and the stadium was quiet once again. The legendary Geordie fervour can be overstated at times.

Charlton were the main cause of this situation. Determined in defence, they were enterprising in attack with Robson, Newton and Whyte all contributing polished touches that created a neat rhythm. And when Newton centred for O'Connell in the 28th minute, a more composed finish would have put Charlton ahead.

Having said that, Clark could have given Newcastle the lead earlier but his 10th-minute snap shot clipped the bar. A little piece of invention was sorely needed and, as seems always the case, it came from Beardsley.

Swivelling on to a pass out of defence, Beardsley flicked the ball into the path of Clark and the man still on Newcastle's transfer list held off Rufus and looped the ball over Petterson.

Yet even the relief at that 32nd-minute breakthrough felt by the Newcastle management and the fans was not translated into overwhelming superiority by their players; this was still a game uncomplicated by incident.

Not for long, though. With ever thicker swirls of fog descending on St James' Park, Charlton equalised, and what a superb goal it was. Pressing forward as they had to after half-time, Charlton saw their captain O'Connell upended by a rash challenge from Clark 20 yards out.

There was still plenty to negotiate with the resulting free-kick but Robson, curling it with his left foot powerfully over the wall and beyond Hislop, made it look easy.

Understandably the Londoners' confidence soared and, with Newcastle frequently losing possession sloppily, Newton and Leaburn both sent half-chances wide.

For Newcastle, Ginola then moved into a more central position and it almost paid dividends soon after Charlton had equalised when he slipped the ball into the path of Shearer. Although his shot was true, Petterson blocked impressively.

A minute earlier Petterson tipped over a 30-yard shot from Barton, who had replaced Watson, but Newcastle continued to show a lack of attacking imagination.

Newcastle: Hislop; Watson (Barton, 53min), Peacock, Albert (Elliott, 51), Beresford, Batty, Ginola, Clark, Gillespie, Beardsley, Shearer.
Charlton: Petterson; Brown, Barness, Chapple, Rufus, O'Connell, Newton, Jones, Robson, Leaburn, Whyte.
Referee: D Allison (Lancaster).

Sir John denies family feud, page 13.

Apt, in a way, that England miss the party



Frank Keating

BY SOME fluke of the fixture list the opening matches fall to Edinburgh and Dublin this weekend, so we can all visualise what the *Four* Nations Championship would have been like had Twickenham's brass neck and Sir John Hall's bombast succeeded in excluding England from the party.

Murrayfield and Lansdowne Road will give off the old familiar winter-warming vapours on Saturday. Wales to Scotland and France to Ireland: each a fraternal one-off, singular and unique. Both of them, in their completely different ways, brotherly and bespoke biennials.

"Feet, Scotland, feet!" to be answered by "Brains, Wales, brains!" And across the Irish Sea the French with their cockerels encounter the Irish with their Molly Malone, native optimism squaring up to inbuilt pessimism. And not an Englishman in sight.

Old, cold Princes Street revels in being awash with red favours. One match morning in the late 1960s, young greats-to-be Gareth and Gerald took a nervous stroll down the long wide street and a stocky scarlet-twirled compatriot caught their gaze. "Up for the match, are you, boys?" he asked them matter-of-fact.

The Scottish match has long been Wales's favourite, aye, and Scotland's too. It is a Celtic blood-brothers' affinity forged in the 1920s and '30s when industrial times were wretched and coffin-cold.

Bound to be a few travelling up in red tomorrow or Saturday old and wise enough to warn "Remember '51", the year when their supposedly luminous Welsh team were knifed and scissored all over Murrayfield. Scotland won 19-0 and, as the classic history Fields of Praise mourned, "25,000 of the record 81,000 returned shell-shocked through the snowbound Scottish lowlands like Napoleon's *grande armée* retreating from Moscow".

Not as painful, mind, as the day Wales were routed 25-10 in 1924. The following morning the Welsh players were traditionally taken to see the Forth Bridge. A committee man, T D Schofield of Bridgend, told them: "Take a good look, boys. It's the last time any of you will see it at the expense of the WRU."

Visiting victories of grandeur, too. Good Lord, can it really be over a quarter of a century since John Taylor's conversion — "the greatest since St Paul" — rang down the epic 1971 match?

Next year, incredibly, it will be 70 winters since Wales fielded six Llanelli men at Murrayfield. They gloriously did the deed that year, and the most famous Scarlet, Albert Jenkins, was reported in the Llanelli Mercury to have been "kissed six times by a gentleman on the train back".

Tomorrow the cars and coaches will career north by motorway. In those days the players were in a WRU-reserved third-class carriage. The committee of course sat in first.

In the blizzard winter of 1947 Hadyn Tanner's team and 700 travelling supporters arrived at Cardiff station on the Friday morning to be told by the Ministry of Transport that there was not enough coal to heat the train or the dining-car kitchen, and by the Ministry of Food that there was nothing to cook anyway. Though hungry and cold, those supporters enjoyed a red-hot feast at Murrayfield that February day: Scotland 8, Wales 22.

More than 15,000 bought the 24-shilling return to Edinburgh in 27 LMS specials in 1934. That year eight colliers from the Rhondda's Tylorstown hired a special aeroplane instead and decked it with leeks and daffodils. Unfortunately the pilot's compass was faulty so they ended up watching a soccer match at Portsmouth. Gnarled old men still chuckle at "the intrepid flying miners".

THE clink of duty-free will be heard as the French throng into Dublin tomorrow. Two of the first three of these fixtures, in 1911 and 1913, were played in Cork. The French crossed to Cobh by boat and entrained into the city on the Friday night. Sean O'Faolain greeted them.

"As the train roared in, the team hung out of the windows waving tricolours through the steam. Vive la France! And when the team fell out of the carriages like bags of apples I was right in the middle of them. 'Vive la France! Cognac! Cognac!' At which they all cheered and laughed and shook hands and kissed one another and shouted 'Vive l'Irlande!' "

Let's drink to that, in Cognac and Scotch. The Four Nations crack. And not an Anglo-Saxon in sight.



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Wenger strikes for the wonderkid of France and leaves PSG fumé

Martin Thorpe

HAVING stolen the little-known Frenchman Patrick Vieira from under the noses of Milan, Arsène Wenger pulled off another Gallic coup yesterday when he signed the wonderkid of French football from under the noses of Paris St Germain. Arsenal have confirmed that Nicolas Anelka, a lanky 17-year-old striker, will join them in the summer on a two-year contract with an option for another two years.

Wenger, with his intimate knowledge of French football, was aware of Anelka's unhappiness at PSG and travelled to Paris to persuade him that his career would be better served by moving to England. PSG are reported to be furious at the loss.

"People don't show enough confidence in me [at PSG]," Anelka said. "At Arsenal I've been assured I'll be on terms with the other forwards. In France other young players play in the big teams; they've had their chance. There's only me who has played only one full match. I'm not leaving for the money, I'm leaving to play."

Anelka has been disillusioned since scoring his only First Division goal on September 20. His resolve to leave was strengthened by the club's signing of another striker, the former France international Cyrille Pouget, in December. PSG already have France's Patrice Loko and Panama's Julio César Dely Valdes as their first-choice strikers.

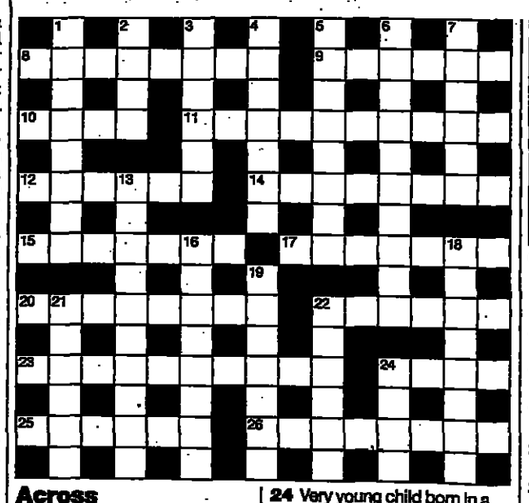
PSG offered Anelka a six-year contract but had not met his father and brothers, who act as his agents, to finalise the deal when Wenger made contact with them on Monday. All Anelka needs now is a letter from the French Football Federation allowing him to leave PSG, and this should be a formality. He may be the youngest player to take advantage of the Bosman ruling.

Sid may be a bit thin on top for a movie star, but Twister had nothing on this.
Riders on the storm

OnLine G2 page 12

Guardian Crossword No 20,862

Set by Logodaedalus

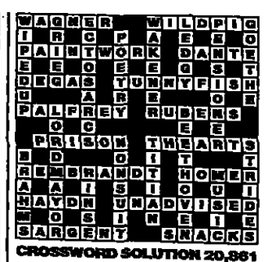


Across

8 The ideal place is seen in March (8)
9 Saw eye to eye with one inclined to gluttony (6)
10 School clothing used in burlesque (4)
11 Clean forks no longer found on breakfast table (10)
12 Content to be of importance (6)
14 Did away with brushwood and couch (6)
15 There's room in the church by the traffic-light (7)
17 Initially the motive for disloyalty (7)
20 He calls for two learners, dishonest but very determined (6)
22 A second summer is more sorrowful (6)
23 Sweetener manufactured by Warburg & Son (5,5)
24 Very young child born in a compartment (4)
25 'I rest' this girl seems to say (6)
26 No-one wants pal meandering and lost at Waterloo (8)

Down

1 Wake in tall coat (8)
2 Irishman retains right to say goodbye (4)
3 About to break collier's machine (6)
4 Cast down short epistle found hidden in clothes (7)
5 Traveller means to get more beautiful, we hear (6)
6 Money on the table may help produce sandwiches (10)
7 It's not mild always in the South East (6)
13 'Arry's not proud to appear in rough cloth in wind-swept plant (10)
16 Unvarying — so no good for this form of worship (8)
18 Free publication is easy to understand (4,4)
19 Wound round silver mounting (7)
21 Insect: one with right disguise under earth (6)
22 Thinly-spread marge and jam (6)
24 Bishop, off-colour, making a statement (4)



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